CHAPTER 2 – LANDSCAPE AND HISTORY

1 THE WĀDĪ AL-NAṬRŪN

1.1 GEOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND THE BASIC PRODUCT

The name Wādī al-Naṭrūn means 'the valley of the natron' and it was first employed in the fifteenth century by the Arab historian al-Maqrīzī (in Wüstenfeld 1845, 109). Medieval Arab texts mention various other names, such as *al-Asqīt* and *Ǧabal al-Naṭrūn* (the Mount of the Natron). Another name commemorates the Arab chief Hubayb ibn Muġfil al-Ġifārī, companion of Muḥammad, who participated in the conquest of Egypt. After the death of caliph 'Utmān, in 655, Hubayb settled in the *wādī* between the Fayyūm and Marīūṭ, which came to be called after him (Ibn Yūnus, 479) [9]. The name *Wādī Hubayb* should be used instead of the *Wādī Habīb* that is repeated by most scholars (*e.g.* Evetts *HPCC*; Evelyn-White 1932, 274; Abd al-Masih and Burmester, *HPEC*; Grossmann 1997, 368; Wipszycka 2009, 214).

Coptic texts use the name ⲥⲓⲏⲧ or ⲥⲓϩⲏⲧ and occasionally ⲥⲏⲏⲧ. According to the most popular interpretation the word derives from the verb ⲥⲓ (meaning 'to measure', 'to weigh') and the word ϩⲏⲧ, (meaning 'the heart') (Amélineau 1893, 452). Thereupon it appears as the place where they *weight the hearts* (Harmless 2004, 173 and 181 note: 31). Another Coptic name that became popular since the seventh century was: ⲡⲧⲱⲟⲩ ⲙⲡⲓϩⲟⲥⲉⲙ, which means the Mount of the Natron (Fakhry 1940, 843-844).

In Latin it was called *Scetis, Scytis, Scythis, Scitium, Scithium*, while in Greek *Σκῖτις, Σκέθις, Σκῦθις, Σκήτης, Σκήτη, Σκητῖον, Σκίαθις, Σκιθιακή (χῶρα)* (list of names with the relevant sources in: Evelyn-White 1932, 27-29). It is supposed by some that the name Sketis derives from the Greek word *ἀσκητής* (the hermit); it seems though that it is the Hellenised form of the Coptic name, the real etymology of which remains uncertain.

Wādī al-Naṭrūn is the most north-easterly of the depressions formed in the Western Desert of Egypt, lying between Alexandria and Cairo, almost at equal distance from both cities. Its south-eastern edge lies at a distance of circa eighty kilometres north-west of Cairo. Like all other depressions of the Western Desert, part of it lies below sea-level. (Fig. 2.1)

The lowest part of the depression lies along its eastern rim and is occupied by a string of lakes, the water surface of which is about twenty-three metres below sea-level. (Embabi 2004, 172-173 – the description that follows largely reproduces the information provided by this author. See also: Hume 1925, 161-172; Said 1962, 13-14, 67-86, 197-215; *Id*. 1993, 36-41 – especially 37-38 about the formation of the Western Desert Depressions; *Id*. 2009; Sampsell 2003, 151. An unpublished M.A. thesis (Minabary 1984) concerning the geomorphology of the Wādī al-Naṭrūn has been submitted at the Ayn Šams University). It covers an oblong area, extending from northwest to southeast for about sixty-five kilometres, with a varying width between seven kilometres in the southeast and twenty-four kilometres in the northwest. This depression is closed from all directions. Due to its elongated oval shape, it has only two sides an eastern and a western side which meet at the northwest and southeast corners. Its sides are characterised by gentle slopes rather than steep scarps.

[9] My attention to the biographical dictionary of Ibn Yunūs was drawn by Dr. Sobhi Bouderbala.

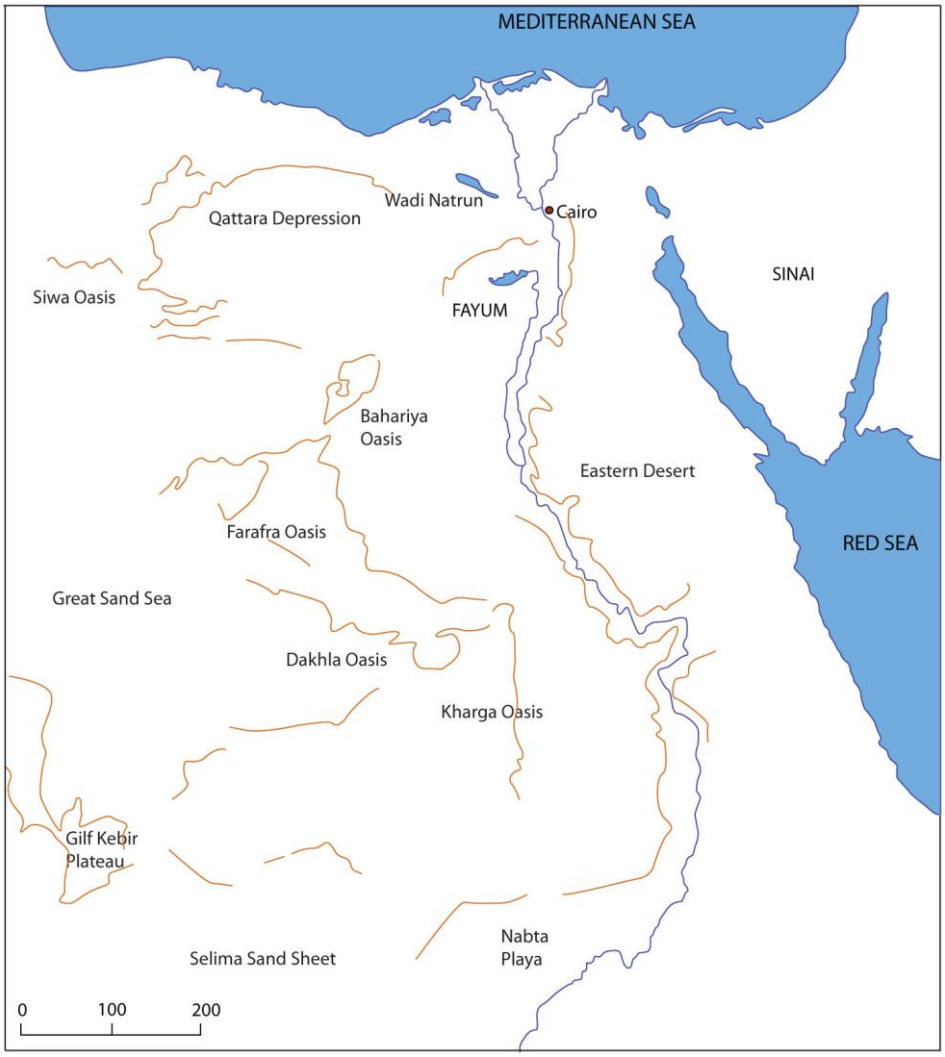

Fig. 2.1. Map of Egypt (after Sampsel 2003, Fig. 13.1)

There are two types of sediments at the depression floor and slopes that are significant from the geomorphological point of view. The first is the ancient Nile sediments (Said 1993) of sand and gravel that spread as terraces at the upper slopes of the eastern side and the middle and southern parts of the western side. The gravel consists mainly of chert, and quartz pebbles mixed with hard limestone pebbles, igneous and metamorphic pebbles (granite, basalt, quartzite and serpentine) together with fragments of fossil wood and feldspars, all in a matrix of loose quartz sand. The second type of sediment is the remnants of old lakebed deposits, which spread as small yardangs along a line parallel to the eastern shores of the present day lakes at the depression floor. They are composed of alternating beds of silt, clay and sand.

This depression is also characterised by the development of a group of small permanent saline lakes. They occupy the lowest part at the depression floor. They extend in a linear form along the main axis of the depression for a distance of about thirty kilometres. Number, area and depth of the lakes vary from season to another according to water supply and evaporation. In summer, the smaller lakes dry up almost entirely, only a few ponds of water being left, and even the larger lakes diminish. It was found that there are approximately sixteen lakes at present. The depth of the large lakes reaches three to five metres, while the small lakes are only a few

centimetres deep. All lakes are fed by the underground water aquifer below the depression, either directly or through the springs at the eastern margins or at the beds of lakes. The main source of the underground water is mainly from the Nile water in the east or from the deeper and older aquifers, which are connected with the local one (discussion about the source and origin of water in Wādī al-Naṭrūn in: Hume 1925, 163-166; Said 2009, 64-68). The water of the lakes varies in the total amount of salts present, as well as in the relative proportions of the several salts. This phenomenon constitutes one of the most remarkable features of the wādī since the lakes are very close together, being almost connected in several cases during winter.

Fig. 2.2. Wādī al-Naṭrūn: the lakes

Natron is a naturally occurring mixture of sodium carbonate and sodium bicarbonate with sodium chloride and sodium sulphate that occurs in the lakes that lie all along the depression (Shortland *et al.* 2006, 521, 525; Lucas 1932; *Id.* 1962, 263). Strictly speaking, natron is the mineral name for the sodium carbonate 10-hydrate.[10] It is from this particular mineral that the name Wādī al-Naṭrūn derives. The natron occurs dissolved in the lake water – from which a thick layer has gradually been deposited at the bottom of some of the lakes – and also as an incrustation on the ground adjoining many of the lakes. The amount present is considerable.

Fig. 2.3. Wādī al-Naṭrūn: concentration of natron in the lakes (photo by the author)

The geomorphological particularities of the Wādī al-Naṭrūn and the importance of the natron were not left unnoticed by the scientists who took part in Buonaparte's expedition to Egypt. The second volume of the monumental work *Description de l'Égypte ou recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte pendant l'expédition de l'armée française* includes a chapter dedicated to the natron

[10] The dominant carbonate that occurs in the lake deposits is frequently sodium carbonate bicarbonate 2-hydrate, *trona* (Shortland *et al.* 2006, 521).

deposits and their exploitation. Some early experiments in the natron lakes were undertaken by Berthollet, who characterised the valley of the natron lakes as a vast laboratory, where nature has prepared an immense quantity of soda (Berthollet 1799, 271).

In ancient Egypt, natron, a primary source of alkali was used for the manufacture of Egyptian faience (Lucas and Harris 1962, 160-178; Nicholson and Peltenburg 2000, 186-187), glass (Lucas and Harris 1962, 183, 185-187; Nicholson 2000, 195; Foy and Nenna 2001; Nenna 2007) and the so-called Egyptian blue pigment (Lucas and Harris 1962, 341; Lee and Quirke 2000, 109). It was also used for making incense (Lucas and Harris 1962, 96) and in other domains such as in medicine (Ebbell 1937; Leca 1971); in mummification (Lucas 1914; Sandison 1963; Garner 1979, 19-24; Rosalle – David 2000, 373-377); in purification ceremonies (Blackman 1918a, 118-120) – especially for purifying the mouth (Blackman 1918b, 156-163); for cleansing the body when soap was still unknown (Leca 1971, 384; Serpico and White 2000, 411); for preserving meats of all kinds (Ikram 2000, 656-671) and for cooking (Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, 31:46); for bleaching linen (Vogelsang – Eastwood 2000, 280); as a detergent for washing the clothes (Vogelsang – Eastwood 2000, 284) and as a disinfectant for the house (Ebbell 1937, 113; Leca 1971, 382).

The above list may be enriched with two more functions of natron, recorded by De Rozière in 1807 (*Description* tome 2, 670). The Egyptian peasants of that time used to eat natron with their corn bread, as well as wet their tobacco with natron before smoking.

Wādī al-Naṭrūn has been the source of natron, not only the principal Egyptian supply, but also for a small export trade, for millennia. The product was transported, stored and evaluated in Ṭarrāna,[11] (Timm 1992, 2537-2543) (modern day Kūm Abū Billū) from antiquity to the Arab period (Toussoun 1931, 7; Picon 2001, 21-23; Décobert 2003, 125-127; Ballet 2007a, 159) and even much later. At the threshold of the nineteenth century Berthollet (1799, 278) witnessed how caravans arrived to Ṭarrāna to store the natron, before transportation. The industry of natron collection and trade was put to an end in the 1970's, when a purer and chemically produced carbonate replaced it (Said 2009, 64).

This oblong stripe in the desert would become an important centre of Lower Egyptian monasticism, after Macarius the Egyptian (Toda 2012), an ex-camel driver (Amélineau 1894, 55-57) and ex-natron smuggler (*AP*, Macarius Aegyptius, 31) himself, withdrew to the region. The *semi-anchoritic* communities developed in the western part of the depression, where they enjoyed a combination of remoteness and accessibility, which must have significantly affected their subsistence. The distance of the area from the Delta, although respectable, did not make relations with the world difficult or discontinuous. Furthermore, the region had the advantage of its own water supply, in addition to a vegetation of bushes and reeds that must have served as raw material for the preparation of mats and baskets by the monks (Wipszycka 2009, 214-215).

[11] The ancient Terenuthis.

1.2 ISSUES OF HISTORIOGRAPHY[12]

Macarius the Egyptian and the birth of asceticism in Sketis

An attempt to understand how the first *semi-anchoritic* communities were born and developed in the area of the Wādī al-Naṭrūn – the prestigious desert of Sketis – as well as how major historical events affected their life, meets with a number of problems posed by the nature and chronology of the texts referring to them.

The story begins when Abba Macarius the Egyptian, known also as Macarius the Great (Toda 2012), 'fled to Sketis' (*AP*, Macarius Aegyptius, 1). The foundation of the first semi-anchoritic settlements in the region is attributed to him; he is hence considered to be the Father of asceticism in Sketis. Past efforts to sketch a historical outline concerning the early years of asceticism in Sketis (*e.g.* Evelyn-White 1932, 60-72), relied heavily on sources that give an account of the Saint's life: Palladius' *Lausiac History*, the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, and the various versions of the Saint's life – in Coptic, Syriac, Ethiopic. Although it is beyond my knowledge to judge or analyse these sources in fine detail, it is necessary to raise a few points, which would explain their 'unhistorical' character.

Palladius (*c.* 363-*c.* 431), a native of Galatia, who travelled to Egypt and settled in Alexandria, Nitria and Kellia, wrote his *Lausiac History* in *c.* 419/420. This source includes brief biographies and vignettes of the desert fathers and mothers, written in Greek (Harmless, 2004, 19, 275-308; Wipszycka 2009, 15-18). Modern scholars have recognised that the information provided by the *Lausiac History* demands a critical analysis. It seems that Palladius did not care to render monastic reality as it was when reproducing oral tradition. His main goal was to amaze and edify the reader, for which purpose he used oral tradition so as to fictionalise reality.

Likewise, the collections of *Apophthegmata Patrum* or *Sayings of the Fathers* (Harmless 2004, 19, 167-273; Wipszycka 2009, 37-41) are generally deprived of historicalness. They belong to the literature known as *paterika*, a term that refers to anthologies of anecdotes about, and sayings of, the desert fathers. These stories focus on monastic leaders, especially Egyptians, active from the 330s to the 460s (Harmless 2004, 19). However, they date to later periods[13], while they must have received their final redaction in Palestine (Harmless 2004, 171). Wipszycka (2009, 37-38) nicely describes their role as a mean to transmit the wisdom of ascetic cycles and give advice to persons lacking experience in ascetic life. Therefore, the anecdotes included in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* served as practical guides, describing the virtuous behaviour and high standards of ascetic life. At the same time, they projected the most prominent figures of the movement, to serve as ideal models and to be preserved in the collective memory.

The *Lausiac History* and the *Aphophthegmata Patrum* are only two examples of texts, which *fashioned, whether consciously or unconsciously, a spiritual landscape that transcended the everyday realities of desert life*, as Goehring (2003, 438) put it. They represent only some first steps towards the creation of the *myth of the desert*

[12] The present form of this unit is due to the useful comments of the examining committee of this thesis, whom I would, therefore, like to thank. In particular, Prof. Dr. Jacques van der Vliet provided me with feedback and helped me change my attitude towards hagiological texts, avoiding biased statements and conclusions. Any mistake or oversight in this version should be exclusively attributed to the author.

[13] Wipszycka (2009, 37) estimates that the *Apophthegmata Patrum* were gathered during a long period, from *c.* 450 to *c.* 600.

(Goehring 2007, 393). In ascetic literature, historical events are not in the foreground. The distance from physical reality gets greater during a composite process of copying, retouching, modifying and translating the prime story (see a detailed account of the process in: Wipszycka 2009, 10-11; Den Heijer 1996).

The Coptic and Syriac versions of the *Life of Saint Macarius* are edited and commented on by Satoshi Toda (2012), who concluded that we know next to nothing about Macarius as an historical figure. There is no clear information as for Macarius' birthplace; was he born in ⲭⲓⲭⲃⲏϩ (Amélineau 1893, 187-189), a place that can be related to modern Šabšīr in the province of Minūfiyya, or somewhere in Upper Egypt? What is known, though, is that before becoming a monk, he worked as a 'cameleer', accompanying the caravans that were in charge of the natron transportation[14] (Amélineau 1894, 52-57; Toda 2012). He probably started his ascetic life at the age of thirty (*c.* 330) exhibiting a remarkable spiritual progress. When he was forty years old (*c.* 340) he was ordained a priest, and after his ordination he fled to Sketis.

Fourth – fifth century

Based on the alleged chronology of life of Macarius (Grossmann 1997, 368), scholars pulled together information in an effort to trace back the origins of the ascetic movement in Sketis. It is generally considered that Macarius fled to this desert somewhere in the second quarter of the fourth century. A *laura* was already in existence in the surroundings of Dayr al- Baramūs towards the end of the fourth century. Before his death Macarius himself founded a second *laura* that was named after him. A third *laura*, that of Saint John the Little, probably existed in the same period (Wipszycka 2009, 216).

These three *laurae* (Baramūs, Saint Macarius and Saint John the Little), plus that of Bishoi (Dayr Anbā Bišuy), are referred to as the four *congregations* of Sketis (Cassian, *Conlationes*, 10.2). At this early date no fortress walls surrounded each settlement. The church building, and possibly some other structures (such as a tower, a kitchen, a bakery and so on) (Wipszycka 2009, 216) would form an architectural nucleus for the scattered groups of cells. Each of these *congregations* would have its own priest to preside at the weekly Eucharist and function as a monastic superior. One of the four monk-priests probably served as the *Father of Sketis* (later called *hegumenos* of Sketis) (Evelyn-White 1932, 180-182; Harmless 2004, 178-180).

Already since the time of Macarius, and especially afterward, the history of Sketis is written in an ambiguous way, often mixing reality with legend. The monks of Sketis are presented as actively involved in the theological conflicts of their time. Several scholars, following Evelyn-White (1932, 115-117), considered that many of the *Sketiotes* accepted the Heresy of Hierax (Brakke 1995, 44-57; Goehring 1999, 110-133), which is probably incorrect (Goehring 1999, 125). They are also presented as taking a serious part in the controversy between the 'Origenists' and the 'Anthropomorphites', as supporters of the second (Chitty 1966, 56-59; Evelyn-White 1932, 125-144; Harmless 2004, 37-38. The best study so far on the Origenist controversy is: Clark 1992).

Between reality and myth stand also the tales describing the consecutive sacks of Sketis by Berber tribes in the fifth century. The invaders are called vaguely *barbarians* (*βάρβαροι*), when they are not distinguished as Mazices. The term

[14] In the *Apophthegmata*, Macarius is presented as a sort of smuggler (*AP*, Macarius Aegyptius, 31: it is mentioned that he used to *steal the natron and sell it*).

Mazices was used to signify all desert tribes living in the western part of Nile. They often organised raids, sacking regions lying at a great distance from their departure point. These sacks were like real military expeditions. It is probably wrong to characterise them as nomadic tribes, because most of them lived in villages surrounded by walls (Wipszycka 2009, 623).

Sketis was plundered three times in the fifth century (Evelyn – White 1932, 154-167; Wipszycka 2009, 624-627). The first destruction is estimated to have taken place in 407 or 408 (Evelyn-White 1932, 154-161, about the date see: 154-155. Meinardus 1961 dates it before the year 408). Many monks fled to other places seeking safety, save Saint Moses the Black and seven monks, who according to the legend remained as the brave defenders of Sketis and were brutally slaughtered by the invaders. As soon as the danger was averted many monks returned to their abodes. About the second sack of Sketis the information is scarce. It is dated to the year 410, based on an *Apophthegm* concerning Arsenius' life (*AP*, Arsenius, 21). An important development, which presumably took place in the aftermath of the second sack of Sketis, was the erection of towers of refuge, something similar to the keeps of the Monasteries in Wādī al-Naṭrūn (Evelyn-White 1932, 166-167; Wipszycka 2009, 624-626, 642-645). It seems that the monks started taking measures to protect themselves against a new potential threat. Notions in texts about monks taking refuge in defence towers are however scarce. Wipszycka (2009, 642) wonders if this is due to the fact that such an action was too evident to be mentioned. In 444 a third barbarian inroad occurred. This is related with the story of the forty-nine Martyrs of Sketis and their slaughter (Evelyn-White 1932, 164-167; Wipszycka 2009, 624-626). During the inroads, monks were kept as captives and used to work for their *masters*. In the framework of the Berber communities they represented groups apart (Wpiszycka 2009, 623-624). Monks are also reported as victims of the slave trade (Wipszycka 2009, 624).

The fifth century was marked by serious theological disputes over the Nature of Christ. Although the events that resulted in the Councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451) (Harmless 2004, 38-43; Camelot 2006; Price 2009) are well-known, there is no information as to the attitude of the monks in Sketis. It is, however, almost impossible not to have been affected throughout the period which followed the rejection of Chalcedon's *Definition* by the Egyptian ecclesiastical authorities. Harmless (2004, 43) claims that after Chalcedon Egyptian monasticism *lost much of its international appeal*. This period of Egyptian history is often overshadowed by bias, anachronisms and prejudices (Van der Vliet 2009); their uncritical repetition is a risk that an inexperienced scholar (including the author) runs.

Fifth – sixth century

The resistance against 'Chalcedon' ushered in a period of *violent conflict and local schisms in the entire East* (Van der Vliet 2009, 280). In Egypt, the developments were complex and ambivalent, despite the fact that part of the literature (*e.g.* Partrick 1996, 35-36) refers to the Council of Chalcedon as a turning point and definite schism between the Churches. In fact, it was during the reign of Justin I (518-527) and his nephew Justinian I (527-565) that the Byzantine State and Church came to insist on the council's pronouncements (Price 2009, 307). From now on a period of systematic persecutions would be launched by the imperial administration, after a time of coexistence of parallel church structures ('Chalcedonian' and 'non-Chalcedonian') (Wipszycka 2007, 343). This happened somewhere in the later part of Justinian's rule

and was continued by his successors. Bishops of miaphysite beliefs were chased out, to be replaced with 'Chalcedonian' ones. Only after these persecutions did a Miaphysite Church arise parallel to the 'Chalcedonian' Church. The unity of the Church had been destroyed by the time of patriarch Peter IV (576-578) (Wipszycka 2007, 344; Van der Vliet 2009, 280).

However, a division between Christian religious groups using denotations, such as 'Copts' referring to 'non-Chalcedonian' populations and Melchites referring to 'Chalcedonians' should be avoided as anachronistic (Van der Vliet 2009, 287). No Egyptian 'nationalism' opposing 'Copts' to Greeks or Byzantines is yet attested (Wipszycka 1992; Van der Vliet 2009, 287). Van der Vliet (2009, 287) makes clear that before the Arab conquest *Egypt was a bilingual country, inhabited by Christian Egyptians, who used either Greek or Coptic, according to time, place, circumstances, social roles and so on, and who were ecclesiastically deeply divided over Christological questions*.

Meanwhile, in the sixth century, the internal history of Sketis was affected by a conflict that agitated the miaphysite cycles. Severus, Patriarch of Antioch and Julian, Bishop of Halicarnassus, two 'anti-Chalcedonian' theologians, who fled to Egypt after being deposed, developed opposite views on the nature of the body of Christ (Evelyn-White 1932, 228-235; Hardy 1952, 127-135; Meinardus 1961, 122-123; Partrick 1996, 41-44). The first maintained, among others, that Christ became completely man, but without sin (Hardy 1952, 128). Due to this belief Severus and his followers were described as *Phthartolatrae* (worshippers of the corruptible). Julian, on the other hand, taught that the body of Christ 'was free of corruption from the moment of union' rather than from the Resurrection only (Leontius of Byzantium, *De sectis*, 10. Evelyn-White 1932, 234). Julian and his followers were known as *Julianists*, or *Aphthartodocetae* (supporters of the doctrine of incorruptibility, *aphtharsia*, of the body of Christ), or *Phantasiastae* (supporters of the teaching of a merely phenomenal body of Christ) (about the *Julianist* or'*Gaianite*' movement in the monasteries of Alexandria see: Łajtar and Wipszycka 1998).

It is considered that Julian's doctrine was so successful in the desert of Sketis that the majority of the monks embraced it. Those who held the opposing doctrine of Severus of Antioch obtained from the governor Aristomachus (Evelyn-White 1932, 231, note 4) permission to erect new churches and towers of refuge, in which they could settle apart from the Julianists (*HPCC* in Evetts 1904, 458). Consequently, new monasteries appeared beside the old ones, as counterparts; they kept the name of the patron saint of the original monastery but added to it the title Theotokos (Mother of God), exalting in this way the significance of the Incarnation, which Julian's doctrine tended to minimise, and reaffirming the charismatic dignity of the Holy Virgin (Evelyn-White 1932, 232-235; Meinardus 1961, 122-123; Cody 1991, 2104; Capuani 2002, 94). For each of the four communities (the Monastery of the Romans (Baramūs), Saint Macarius Monastery, the Monastery of Bishoi and the Monastery of Saint John the Little) a duplicate 'Virgin' Monastery was founded.

In the late sixth century (*c.* 570), Sketis was devastated and severely damaged by barbaric tribes for a fourth time (Evelyn-White 1932, 249-250; Wipszycka 2009, 641-642). During this inroad, many monks were slain or carried off as captives. Others were scattered in various places inside and outside of Egypt (Moschus, *PS*, 54, 55, 152). Despite the serious losses that the fourth sack brought to Sketis, monks returned to their settlements, after a period of hardship.

Seventh century

A row of tumultuous, yet significant events both for Egypt and the Byzantine Empire marked the years down to 642. In 608 Heraclius (emperor from 610 to 641) revolted against the unpopular emperor Phocas (emperor from 602 to 610) and Alexandria was thrown into turmoil. Street violence in the city, which was caused by politics and religion, was tempered by the charities of John III, 'the Almsgiver' ('Chalcedonian' patriarch from 610 to 619), whose patriarchate would be followed by the Persian invasion and occupation of Egypt during the period from 619 to 629. This was a *prelude* to the Arab invasion and the final occupation of Egypt, 639–642, under ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ (Keenan 2000, 636-637; see also: Coquin 1975).

Despite what is often repeated, the Arab conquest of Egypt did not bring sudden and profound changes to the existing social and administrative system (Sijpesteijn 2007a; *eadem* 2007b; Papaconstantinou 2010a; *eadem* 2010b). Sijpesteijn (2007b, 183) summarises the situation as follows: *The Arab conquest did not result in mass confiscations of land in Egypt, and there was no programme of land rewards for the conquering elite. Nor is there evidence of large-scale emigration or the evacuation of the local population. Lower Byzantine administrative personnel remained in their posts; only at the highest reaches of the administration was a new echelon of Arabs inserted, operating from the newly founded capital Fusṭāṭ, modern-day Cairo. The indigenous elite retained their estates and positions in the financial and political administration that their economic and social status conferred. Bishops and other members of the clergy continued their important role in the economic and social organisation of the province.*

One more *myth*, which was maintained for years, concerns the attitude of the Egyptians towards the Arab invaders. Egyptians are often presented as welcoming the Arab armies as saviours from Byzantine oppression. An exaggerated manifestation of such an attitude is attributed to the monks of Sketis by the fifteenth century Arab historian al-Maqrīzī. According to the story seventy thousand (!) monks went to Ṭarrāna to salute ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ and to implore his protection for them and their monasteries. ʿAmr granted their request and *wrote them a letter, which is still kept among them* (*al-Maqrīzī* in Wüstenfeld 1845, 110). *He granted them also revenue to be levied on Lower Egypt* (Evelyn-White 1932, 268). Evelyn-White (1932, 268-269) was rightly sceptical, both for the *grotesquely exaggerated* number of monks and the information about ʿAmr's endowment.

The *Chronicle of John Bishop of Nikiu*, which is recognised as the most reliable source, being written only some decades after the events it describes, gives no hint about such behaviour on behalf of the Egyptians. On the contrary, he stands equally against the Arab conquerors and the 'false Christians', who joined them (Van der Vliet 2009, 288). It is, however, with the *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church* (Evetts; Abd al-Masih and Burmester 1943; detailed discussion follows), a text usually ascribed to Sawīrus ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, Bishop of al-Ašmūnayn , that the attitude towards Arabs changes. Now the invaders are presented as the allies of the suppressed Egyptian population, with patriarch Benjamin I (622-661) being their representative and ʿAmr's natural ally (Van der Vliet 2009, 288).

Indeed, Wipszycka (2007, 346) notes that *the first generation of Egyptian ecclesiastics acting under Arab rule had nothing to complain about*. Church property was not confiscated nor did the Arab administration interfere with internal ecclesiastical matters. This happened only in cases of complications that derived from the doctrinal division, when 'non-Chalcedonians' and 'Chalcedonians' started

appealing to the Arab authorities in their conflicts (Wipszycka 2007, 346; Sijpesteijn 2007b, 187). As for the sympathy of ‘Amr for the patriarch Benjamin I and his miaphysite flock, this does not mean that the former did not try to treat equally the ‘Chalcedonians’. Sijpesteijn (2007b, 188-189) observes that ‘Amr was generally careful *not to antagonise the ‘Chalcedonians’, who had enjoyed the support of Byzantine rulers to the disadvantage of the miaphysites*.

Eighth – ninth centuries

From now on, the *History of the Patriarchs* remains the main source of information about the monasteries in the desert of Sketis, which came to be called Wādī Hubayb. About this source Den Heijer (1996, 70) clarifies that *the text is the result of a long tradition of historical writing: Coptic authors recorded the history of their church and their country, each one of them continuing the work of a predecessor. The early historians in this tradition wrote in Coptic, and their continuators, from the eleventh century onwards, wrote in Arabic*. The distance between the final redaction of the text and the actual date of the events described is often considerably great. Nevertheless, Kennedy (1998, 63-64) considers that despite its relative lack of objectivity, which derives from the unreserved support of Coptic Christianity against Muslims and Christians of other sects, the *History of the Patriarchs* gives a wholly different perspective expressing the opinion of the often suppressed populations.

The eighth century is marked by fiscal oppressions (Kennedy 1998 with a list of relative bibliography on p. 67, note:11), ushering in a period of hardship for the ‘Coptic’ Church and its people, which the *History of the Patriarchs* dramatically narrates. The system of calculating and collecting taxes changed; hence churches and monasteries could not find themselves protected against fiscal pressure and the harsh methods of the governors who imposed it (Wipszycka 2007, 346; Sijpesteijn 2007a, 450-451). Repeated rebellions of ‘Copts’ protesting at over-taxation were physically repressed (Kennedy 1998, 65). Gradual conversions to Islam began as taxation became harder for non-Muslims (Kennedy 1998, 67; Sijpesteijn 2007a, 453-454; Papaconstantinou 2010).

The monasteries of Wādī Hubayb were of course not exempted from taxation and the *History of the Patriarchs* gives a tragic and vivid account of the events. Besides the hardships provoked by high taxes, two more incidents marked the Wādī in the years to come. During the Patriarchate of Mark III (799-819), the *Arabs* plundered Wādī Hubayb for a fifth time. Monks were kept as captives, while churches and cells were demolished. *And the holy seniors were scattered in every part of the world* (*HPCC* in Evetts 1915, 438). The sack must have occurred shortly before the death of Mark III (April 17, 819). Evelyn-White argues that it must have taken place in 816 or early in 817 (Evelyn-White 1932, 298). This time the attack came from nomads coming from the south, therefore not Mazikes (Wipszycka 2009, 627-628).

A new incursion took place in 866 (Wipszycka 2009, 627, 644-). After this sack, the situation remained precarious and the *History of the Patriarchs* refers to certain *Muslim tribes* (*HPEC* in Abd al-Masih and Burmester 1943, vol. 2, pt. 1, 56-57) and *Bedouins* (*HPEC* in Abd al-Masih and Burmester 1943, vol. 2, pt. 1, 56-60) that continuously plundered the monasteries and the cells of the monks. Faced with the permanent threat of the dangerous invaders, who established themselves in the surroundings of the monasteries of Wādī Hubayb, Patriarch Shenoute I (858-880)

decided to build a fortified wall around the Church of Saint Macarius (*HPEC* in Abd al-Masih and Burmester 1943, vol. 2, pt. 1, 68; see also: Grossmann 2002, 311).

The fortification of the Monastery of Saint Macarius is a decisive step, but it should not be regarded *that from this time onwards the monks dwelt within a limited area defined by four walls* (Evelyn-White 1932, 328; Wipszycka 2009, 647). The walled area must have undoubtedly served as the centre of gravity for the community and around it a number of 'dependent cells' continued to exist. It must have been in the second half of the fourteenth century that those cells were finally abandoned and the remaining monks were concentrated within the walled monastery. It may be assumed that the example of Saint Macarius' Monastery was followed by the other communities that existed in Wādī Hubayb and that they were also walled in the last quarter of the ninth century (Evelyn-White 1932, 329; Wipszycka 2009, 647). The walls enclosed the core of the complexes, which included churches, towers, communal buildings (storehouses, bakeries, accommodation for visitors) and presumably the cells of the most prominent brothers (Wipszycka 2009, 647).
An age of walled monasteries was thereby inaugurated.

2 THE OLD MONASTERY OF BARAMŪS

Since 1994 until the present, a team from Leiden University (the Netherlands) has been conducting archaeological fieldwork at a site located north of the present Monastery of the Virgin Mary of Baramūs, which is the most northerly of the monasteries in Wādī al-Naṭrūn. The site was known as Dayr Abū Mūsā al-'Aswad (Monastery of Saint Moses the Black). After a survey in 1994, two trial trenches were dug in 1995. From 1996 to 1999 annual excavation campaigns, sponsored by the Netherlands Organisation for the Advancement of Scientific Research (NWO), took place. The excavation work continued in 2002 and new campaigns started taking place again on an annual basis from 2005 to 2009. The archaeological research, conducted from 2002 onwards, was financed by the Faculty of Archaeology of Leiden University.

The archaeological investigation at the site, known as Dayr Abū Mūsā al-'Aswad, was initially motivated by some doubts concerning its proper identification. Peter Grossmann (1992) was the first to suggest that the *kom* north of the present Monastery of the Virgin Mary of Baramūs actually contains the remains of the older Monastery of Baramūs, in the surroundings of which one of the first – if not the first – *laurae* was founded in the late fourth century. Further evidence confirmed this view (Gabra 1997; Innemée 2000). That means that the monastery, which stands today, is the sixth century 'Severan' duplicate, which was erected, as a result of the so-called Gaianite heresy or the doctrine of Julian of Halicarnassus; next to that stood its older 'Gaianite' counterpart. Both monasteries must have functioned side by side for about a millennium. After one of them was deserted the confusion about the proper names of both monasteries must have started, while it seems unclear how the name of Saint Moses the Black became involved.

2.1 THE EXCAVATION SITE[15] (Fig. 2.4)

The main features of the excavated monastic site are the following: a central church; a square-shaped building – probably a defence tower – which was uncovered at the south-eastern corner; the living quarters or cells of the monks, which have been discovered in the western part of the site, as well as at the north-eastern corner. A defensive wall surrounds the entire complex. The settlement was inhabited from the fourth century until the Mamlūk period.[16]

The church has been built and remodelled in several different phases. Most of the remains excavated until now, belong to the second phase of the building and its later modifications. Nevertheless, in several places, foundation stones as well as floor- and wall-plaster have been unearthed, inferring the existence of an earlier building (first church). In addition it was evident that several stone blocks were re-used in the building of the second church for a second time. Among them, a block with a relief representation of a pharaoh, with a part of a cartouche, that has been identified as that belonging to Amenemhat I. The remains of this first building are unfortunately so

[15] This chapter summarises the results of the excavation work held from 1996 to 2007 and it is based on the publications of the field director K. C. Innemée (see: Innemée 2000 and Innemée 2005) as well as on the unpublished yet reports. Discordances to the published reports are possible, as a result of the ongoing research.

[16] It is difficult to define when exactly the site was abandoned (certainly somewhere after the end of the thirteenth century).

scarce that it is impossible to surmise its exact architectural plan. Its size must have corresponded more or less to that of the second church, a reason to believe that it was not pulled down and replaced by the second church because it was too small. Furthermore a dating is difficult to be proposed. It could be assumed though that the first church must have been constructed in the late fourth – fifth century, as the level of its floor corresponds to the floor level of the tower that, according to the pottery finds, dates within this period.

Fig. 2.4. Dayr al-Baramūs: plan of the excavation site (until the 2006 season)

It is not known what exactly caused the destruction of the first church, but one may assume that it was severely damaged during the barbarian incursions that devastated Sketis in the first half of the fifth century. The second church must have replaced the first one almost completely and only some pillars must have been incorporated in the new church. The new building measured 15m by almost 30m and initially followed the architectonical plan of a three-aisled basilica. Of the structure of this church only the nave has been preserved in its original state, while the eastern part was remodelled in a later phase. At least three entrances were leading to the church: one in the west, not situated in the centre of the wall, one in the north and one in the south. In a later period the western door was blocked, while the southern entrance was moved to the east. Slightly east of the main entrance, in the northern wall, a fourth entrance could have possibly existed. This door was blocked and in front of it a tomb was made. The westernmost pillars were L-shaped and had round, slender columns attached to the side of the nave. The bases of these columns were inversed Coptic capitals with acanthus-like foliage decoration. East of the L-shaped pillars there were two paired columns and two pair of rectangular pillars followed by two paired columns and a rectangular pillar with attached round columns again. The pillars were connected by brick arches and the roofing must have consisted of barrel vaults over the side-aisles and a wooden roof over the nave. Collapsed parts of these arches and vaults were found among the debris of the building. In the centre of the return-aisle a basin of about 0.80m deep that measures an average of 1.50m x 1.20m is found. It has been interpreted as an Epiphany-tank, a basin for the blessing of the water at the Feast of Epiphany. During the Mamlūk period,[17] this basin was filled up with debris and sand, and a plaster floor was over laid. The western part of the southern aisle has an elevated floor under which a small vault, 1.35m high, is located. Access to it is given by a vertical shaft, while the purpose that it served in the second church is unknown. There is clear evidence that originally it was part of the first church and since it was kept as a prominent part of the second one, it must have had a special meaning or function.

At a certain moment the second church was remodelled and modernised, especially in its eastern part. In all the church a new plaster floor was laid, so that the floor level became approximately 0.20m higher. The easternmost pillars of the nave were incorporated in walls that created the *ḫūrus*, a separate area between the nave and the sanctuary. The entrance to the *ḫūrus* was possible through a central entrance from the nave and from the side-aisles. The fact that the *ḫūrus* is an element introduced into Coptic architecture in the middle of the seventh century leads us to believe that this third phase of remodelling and modernization of the church could be dated at earliest in the late seventh, or most likely in the eighth century. East of the *ḫūrus*, the sanctuary went through a thorough remodelling. The eastern wall was replaced by a parallel wall slightly more to the west. The new sanctuary (*haykal*) is square-shaped with a small apse at the eastern side. In front of the apse a limestone *synthronon* was constructed. In its present shape the *synthronon* consists of a rectangular base with slightly curved superstructure made of bricks. In front of it lies the altar, a red-brick construction formed by four rectangular supports connected by arches. To the north and the south of the *haykal* two side rooms (*pastoforia*) are to be found. The outer walls of these *pastoforia* were replaced and moved in outward direction, so that the church building became wider in the eastern part. It is not clear whether the southern *pastoforion* had a direct connection with the *ḫūrus*, but it does

[17] The potsherds included in the filling of the Epiphany-tank date to the Mamlūk period.

have an access from the *haykal*. On the other hand, the northern *pastoforion* had no connection with the *haykal*, but is accessible from the *ḫūrus*. This room is divided in two parts: a western and an eastern, which has a doorway leading to the bakery behind the church. The bakery consisted of a small room with a cylindrical oven. It has been proposed that it would serve for the preparation of the Eucharistic Bread. Directly to the north a small cistern was found, measuring 1.75m x 1.50m in plan and with an average height of 1.90m. It consists of four vaulted parts, supported by a central square pillar.

Throughout the site, especially in the living quarters and the utility buildings, a destruction level is evident. The monumental buildings, such as the church and the tower were less damaged. This could mean that even if they were damaged they must have been restored instead of having been pulled down and replaced. The destruction level has been related to the events that took place in the ninth century during the fifth (817) or more likely the sixth (866) sack of Sketis. In this period we can place the construction of a domed entrance porch and a staircase to the south of the church, as well as the bridge to the tower. As a part of the ninth century refurbishment or later, two wooden separation screens must have been added. The first was standing in front of the entrances to the *haykal* and the *pastoforia* and ran all along the width of the *ḫūrus* and the second was constructed in the middle of the nave. Only remains of those screens have been found.

A further major change was the construction of an additional *haykal*, which changed the *southern pastoforion* into a separate chapel. This addition was done when several older structures outside of the church had been pulled down. The new *haykal* is square in plan and has a square podium for the altar and a rectangular *synthronon* against the eastern wall. It could be dated to the tenth century, as it resembles the church excavated in the Monastery of Saint John the Little that was dated to the same century.

Probably around the end of the ninth century the bakery for the liturgical bread, found at the east of the church, was destroyed or pulled down. In this place a small cemetery was laid out, extending both to the north and the south of the new *haykal*. So far thirty-six burials, complete tombs or remains of disturbed tombs, have been excavated.

At the south-eastern corner of the site the excavation brought to light a square building measuring 16m x16m that has been interpreted as a defence tower. It had an internal structure of 1m thick walls, dividing the plan into nine equal squares of 3.2m x 3.2m. The outer walls had a thickness of 2m. These dimensions could mean that the building had more than one storey, while the walls must have been strong enough to support a building of at least 15m high. The square in the north-western corner was divided in two compartments and could be regarded as the foundation of a stairway. The central square has been interpreted as the bottom of a shaft that would provide air and light to the ground floor. A buttress wall of re-used limestone blocks, some of which bear traces of fire, was constructed around the tower, as part of the restoration program that was undertaken after the destruction of the ninth century. Corner-buttresses of conical shape that once supported the building were incorporated within the buttress-wall. The tower dates back to an early period (fourth – fifth century), possibly the earliest of the settlement. This can be deduced from the depth of the foundation and floor levels, the early find material and the fact that all the other constructions are founded at a higher level.

In the western part of the complex, a number of rooms that have been identified as cells of monks have been discovered. The upper strata in this area show the

remains of improvised structures, built with re-used materials, mainly limestone. Two kitchen-areas, with a great number of fireplaces, were found. These had not been in use at the same time, but apparently the one shortly after the other. In this area of the cells, the difference between the earlier and the later phases of habitation is clearly visible. The phase before the ninth-century destruction is characterised by a well-structured mud brick architecture. These early buildings that could be dated to the sixth or seventh century have been levelled and new structures have been built. The arrangement of the cells built in the frame of the ninth-century restoration program does not correspond to that of the earlier cells. A separate mud brick cell (99V) is found in the north-eastern corner of the excavation site. No traces of destruction and rebuilding were visible here. This cell, which could be dated to the sixth century, was surrounded by the outer wall of the monastery that was constructed no later than the last quarter of the ninth century.

The outline of the wall that surrounds the monastery were more or less clear on the basis of the survey, while in several areas it is clearly visible at the surface. Its thickness has an average of 2m. Its relatively late date is dictated by the fact that its foundations are approximately 1 m higher than the foundations of the buildings it surrounds. At first only a mud brick wall was built and it was later reinforced with a facing of limestone. After the abandonment of the monastery, this facing was removed. At the north-eastern corner the mud brick wall was reinforced with a limestone corner buttress. The entrance of the wall, at the south-eastern corner of the tower, was initially 4m wide. During the first reinforcement of the wall, the entrance was narrowed down to a gate of little more than 1m wide. A second reinforcement made the wall considerably thicker here.

A number of other structures that are not described here date to the Mamlūk period.

2.2 SELECTED CONTEXTS (Fig. 2.5)

One of the handicaps for a proper understanding of the developments of the architecture at the site of the Old Baramūs is the fact that much of the stratification has been disturbed by later digging. The main purpose for this must have been the search for building materials for the neighbouring Monastery of the Virgin. Much of the building material for the enlargement of the perimeter wall that was carried out in the eighteenth century must have been quarried at the site of the Old Baramūs. During the restoration of the Church of Saint John, in the Monastery of the Virgin of Baramūs, it appeared that irregular re-used blocks of limestone, as well as several column drums with the same diameter as those found in the church of the Old Baramūs were used in its construction. This can only mean that until the late nineteenth century building material was quarried off at the site, especially from the ruins of the church. This also explains why during the clearing of the nave mainly sand was found, while collapsed parts of arches and vaults were lying here and there without a trace of most of the piers and columns that supported them once.

The case of the tower is similar. There, the square outlines that were seen during the survey that took place before the excavation did not mark the top of the eroded wall of the tower, but an accumulation of debris outside the remains of the building. This debris came from inside the tower; afterwards it slid back into the square, explaining why the outline of the tower was filled with alternating layers of mixed debris and windblown sand. The find material in these layers varied from the late fourth or fifth to the thirteenth century and was completely out of context. This must have been caused by a restoration campaign that probably took place in the last quarter of the thirteenth century. The last remains of the walls of the tower must have been quarried off at that time and for this purpose the interior was excavated and the large limestone blocks were removed down to the foundation level. The smaller rubble and sand were left outside the buttress-wall, which was left in place since the quality of its material was too poor. Evidence for this was a purse with ten coins, found between the accumulated rubble west of the tower. Four of them could be identified as belonging to the reign of Baybars al Zaher (1260-1277) and could be related to the restoration program, carried out in Baramūs, during the patriarchate of Gabriel III (1268-1271).

Despite its extremely disturbed and in many cases confusing stratigraphy, the tower is of special interest for the current study as it includes the majority of the earliest pottery finds. So far, nowhere else in the site, finds that date as early as in the end of the fourth century have been located. Hence the objects that are found in non-stratified areas, in and around the tower, could not be excluded and they constitute the context 1.

Nevertheless, in the area of the tower, it has been possible to discern some less ‘contaminated’ contexts – or even not ‘contaminated’ at all. Context 2 includes material found in the square 99I,[18] underneath the pebble floors Ba / Ga and especially related to the floor Tb, which more or less corresponds to the foundation level of the tower. Here the majority of the finds dates from the late sixth to the seventh century.

[18] Square 99I is the continuation of 98V and covers the south-eastern part of the tower.

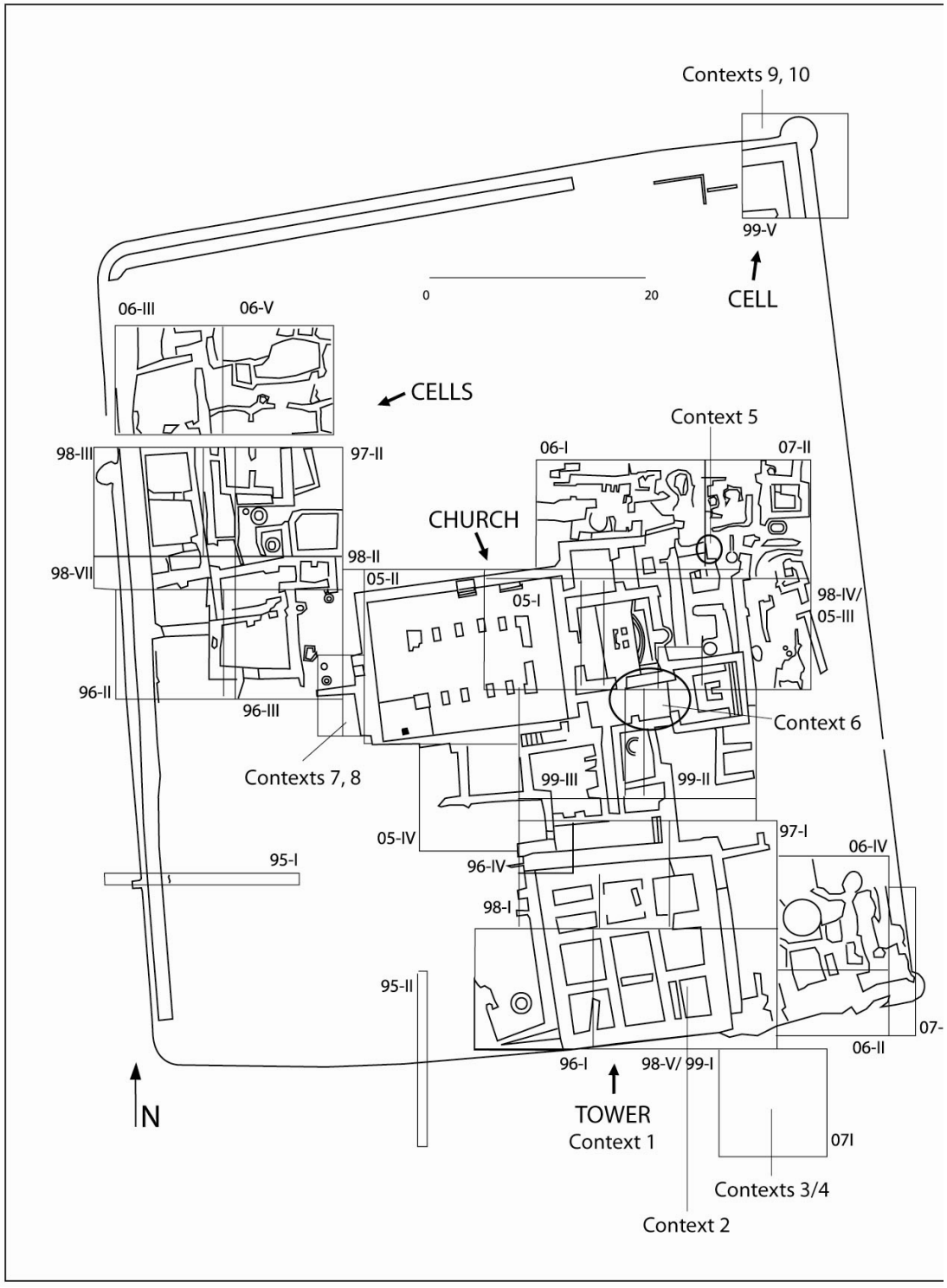

Fig. 2.5. Dayr al-Baramūs, plan of the excavation site: selected contexts

In 2007, trying to solve the mystery of the tower's stratification, it was decided to excavate a square (07I) outside the south-eastern corner of this building. Although this square was empty of any architectural finds, it was proven extremely interesting, with the expected reverse stratigraphy appearing even more confusing. Nonetheless,

two more contexts that remained 'clear' have been luckily traced. Context 3[19] includes find material mainly from the fifth century, some sherds reaching the seventh century. This context is found between a sequence of disturbed layers that have provided material dating from the seventh to the tenth century or even to the Mamlūk period. Below the underlying disturbed layers, another 'clear' context dating to the Mamlūk period appears. Under that, a new row of mixed layers occurs, until context 4[20] is found at the 'bottom' of the square and includes pottery dating from the fifth to the seventh century. It is very likely that Contexts 3 and 4 constitute a whole, as often sherds from both contexts compose a single vessel. However, in order to be precise and due to the row of intermediate layers, a separate number is given to each layer. Cases of sherds from Contexts 3 / 4 matching with shards from Context 1 may serve as evidence that these were initially deposed inside the tower.

It has already been mentioned how the area of the church was disturbed, since in the late centuries it provided building material to the still existing Monastery. Nonetheless, two very interesting contexts have been traced. Context 5[21] includes a row of amphorae that was found running westwards, against or below the northern wall (wall BJ) of the 'second church'. The line of amphorae continued in a southwards direction. All the amphorae belong to the type *Late Roman 7* and date to the mid-seventh century. They are found reversed, carefully positioned in neat rows. A first thought, during the excavation, was that they were probably used as a substructure for a floor or a wall. It was soon noticed though that the area where they extended must have been an open one. It seems that the row of amphorae continued northwards and mainly eastwards. Three more complete amphorae were traced but not removed. In the relevant report it is mentioned that among the amphorae that were left *in situ*, one belonged to a type other than *Late Roman 7*. Future fieldwork will hopefully determine the exact function of those amphora-rows.

In the central compartment of the *southern pastoforion* a rectangular bin, dug in the natural bedrock, was excavated. It must have been left open for a long period, but at a certain moment it was filled and a plaster floor was laid over. Context 6 represents the filling of the underground bin, as well as the finds related to the plaster floor that covered it. This modification probably took place when the southern *pastoforion* was turned to a chapel – apparently after the ninth century destruction. The possibility that the filling of the underground bin took place in the tenth century – no later than the first half – is very likely, judging by the pottery finds. Some sherds belonging to earlier periods are not bothersome, as they can be related to the times when the bin was still open.

A square (07III) was opened between the church and the cells on the western part of the site. Approximately from the outcrop of a layer of compact sand[22] until a layer of sand mixed with pebbles, potsherds and some charcoal[23] and even deeper until a layer of fine sand, occasionally with crystallised salt,[24] a pottery dump has been located (context 7). It is quite probable that a sort of bin was sloppily dug and

[19] From 07I, Feature B, 42 to 07I[32](52)55. (The square brackets include the area excavated within the square, while the parentheses the layer removed. The number that follows that of the layer's indicates the pottery lot).
[20] From 07I[42](83)88 to 07I[44](89)95.
[21] 07II[52](94)91-92.
[22] 07III[22](37)34: feature V.
[23] 07III[22](47)45 and <61>.
[24] 07III[22](52)48.

the waste was thrown in there. A dating to the period from the seventh to the early ninth century is quite likely.

In the same square, outside the western wall of the church, bedded into plaster floor T, a cooking pot was found. This single find constitutes an individual context (context 8) that dates in the seventh century. Its exact function has not yet been determined, as it is found in the corner of a construction (niche) at the western face of the church's western wall, which is not sufficiently interpreted.

The cell that appeared less disturbed is the one lying at the north-eastern corner of the site (99V). While removing the debris from the interior of the room a row of mixed layers appeared. The upper strata did not include any early finds, nevertheless during the removal of level five, some interesting sherds have been found. Context 9[25] includes material from the sixth to the thirteenth century, but only selected sherds that correspond to the chronological span of the present study will be discussed. Outside the cell and the wall that surrounded the whole monastic complex – in the corner between walls H and E – context 10,[26] a pottery dump, has been located. It could be related to the cell 99V or to another domestic area. This dump can be dated to the second half of seventh to the mid-eighth century, or slightly later.

The following table summarises the information about the contexts that included the pottery finds to be presented. In addition, the validity of each context is noted, so as to define the reliability of the proposed dates. Bailey's (1998, 158) system is adopted, though in a somehow simplified way. The validity shades are represented by capital letters (A: good; B: good, but maybe covering a long period; C: spoilt; D: not good, but assumptions can be made; E: not good or too wide to be useful). In chapter eight the contents of each context will be presented.

[25] 99V[1](5)5.
[26] 99V[2](11)10, 99V[3](12)11.

CONTEXT	BUILDING	SQUARE(S)	FEATURES/ CHARACTERISTICS	DATE	VALIDITY
1	TOWER	97I, 98I, 96I, 98V/99I, 07I	Material found during the removal of windblown sand and mixed debris. Out of context.	4^{th} –13^{th} c.	E
2	TOWER	99I	Layers under pebble floors Ba/Ga. Related to floor Tb.	6^{th} – 7^{th} c.	A
3	TOWER	07I	Layers: Feature B, 42 – [32](52)55.	4^{th} – 7^{th} c. Mainly 5^{th}c.	A
4	TOWER	07I	Layers: [42](83)88 – [44](89)95.	4^{th} – 7^{th} c.	B
5	CHURCH (Phase 2)	06I 07II	06I[27](37); 07II[52](94): alongside eastern part of the northern wall's remains.	650 – 700	A
6	CHURCH (Phase 5)	Southern Pastoforion	Underground Bin.	850 –900/ 950	A
7	CELL	07III	[23](36)34 – [34](56)51: under destruction level – pottery dump.	7^{th} – 9^{th} c	A
8	CELL	07III	[26](40)<53> In plaster floor T	7^{th}	A
9	CELL	99V	[1](5)5: removal of debris – inside the room.	6^{th} –13^{th} c.	D
10	CELL	99V	[2](11)10, [3](12)11: pottery dump – outside the room.	650 – 750	A

Table 2.1. Selected contexts