

Apophthegmata Patrum 4

Translation of the Coptic text

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This is the fourth and final part of this translation of the Coptic text.

In his table of concordances (p. 155ff) Chaîne provides references to the Greek and Latin texts in the PG and PL, respectively. The name Nau with a number occurs in these concordances. François Nau published these texts in *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*. Since I have discovered that many of these can now, thanks to the good offices of Charles Jones of the Ancient World Online (AWOL), be downloaded, I thought it might be useful to give the details of the locations of these texts, according to volume, year and page nos. with the number of the sayings in brackets. The manuscripts from which they have been taken are all in Paris.

There is no Greek or Latin version of sayings 243 to 263. I have broken saying 269 up in order to make it easier to read.

ROC 10 (1905):	387-417	(Introduction)
ROC 12 (1907) :	43-69	(1-37)
	171-189	(38-62)
	393-413	(63-132)
ROC 13 (1908):	47-66	(133-174)
	266-297	(175-215)
ROC 14 (1909):	357-379	(216-297)
ROC 17 (1912):	204-211	(298-334)
	294-301	(335-358)
ROC 18 (1913):	137-146	(359-400)

212. A brother asked an elder: 'Is it the name that saves or the deed ?' The elder replied: 'I know a brother who, while praying, was visited by the thought of wishing to see the soul of just man and a sinner as they were dying. God did not wish to distress him in his wish. While he was sitting in his cell, a wolf came to in to him, bit at his clothes and began to drag him away. The elder followed him. As he approached a city, he went and left him sitting outside a monastery. There was a man there whose name was outside because he was a great anchorite.¹ He was ill, looking forward to his hour. The brother looked and saw many candles and torches. They were prepared and the whole city was weeping, saying: *It is God who gives us bread and water.* The whole city was mourning² for his sake: *If anything happens to him, we will all die with him.* The hour of death approached and the brother saw the 'Tartaros occupant of Amente'³ coming out with a forked flame in his hand with three points. He heard a voice saying: *As this soul has not given me a single hour's rest, do not give it any rest as you bring it forth the from the body.* He drove the flame down into his chest for an hour torturing it. He brought forth his soul. Afterwards the brother came to the city and found a stranger lying ill, with no-one looking at him. The brother sat with him for a day. At the moment he he was about to die, the brother saw Michael and Gabriel come out to carry his soul. One sat on his right, the other on his left, and they continued to beg his soul to come forth from the body. Michael said to Gabriel: *God told us not to distress the soul by using force, so it is impossible for me to bring it out forcefully.* Michael cried out, saying: *God, what do you want to do to this soul that does not want to come out.* A voice came to him: *Look, I will send David and his harp and all the psalmists of Jerusalem so that the soul will hear their beautiful voices and come out.* They all came down and surrounded the soul and sang to it. It came out and joyfully sat in the hand of Michael.'

1 Implying that most cells were anonymous.

2 Typographical error: read **NE2TE**

3 I am unable to follow Chaîne's reference to the Greek text: there is no 187d in Nau's publication and Nau's text no. 187 has nothing to do with this text. For the phrase in Coptic cf. W. Worrell 'Magical Texts *Orientalia* 4 (1935) text II line 28.

213. It has been said about an elder that he came to a city selling wares. He took his rest by chance in the forecourt of a rich man about to die. While he was sitting there, he looked and saw black horses with fearful black people on them, each with a cudgel of fire in the hand. They reached the forecourt of the house and left their horses outside the house and both entered hurriedly. The sick man saw them, cried aloud and shouted out in a loud voice: 'Help me.' Those who had come for him said: 'At the time when the sun is about to set on you, you seek God. Why have you not sought God until today ? There is therefore no portion, no help and no comfort for you.'

214. An elder said; 'There are three things honoured by monks, to which it is necessary for us to strive in fear and trembling and spiritual joy: the communion of the Holy Mystery, the table of the brothers and the basin to wash their feet.'

215. He brought another example of this sort, saying: 'There was a great elder, a visionary. It happened that he was eating with a group of brothers and, during the meal, the elder had a vision with the help of the Holy Spirit: he saw those sitting at the table, some eating honey, some eating bread and some eating dung. He wondered to himself and asked God, saying: *Lord, reveal to me this mystery that these same foodstuffs are laid before them, but when they eat, it becomes clear that they are transformed, some into honey, some into bread and some into dung. A voice came to him from on high: Those eating honey are those who sit at the table in fear and trembling and spiritual joy and pray continuously, their prayer coming forth from them like incense before God, so they eat honey; those eating bread are those who thank God for this of the good things God has given to them; those eating dung are those who murmur, this is good or this bad, but this is not fitting, rather it is fitting to glorify God and send blessings to the Lord so that what has been said will be fulfilled in us: What you do, do it for the glory of God.'*

Drawing of an elder among the letters

ΑΠΑ ΔΟΥΛΟΣ

About the holy fathers who perform miracles and prodigies

216. Apa Doulos the disciple of Apa Bêsarion said: 'As we were walking by the sea, I became thirsty and I said to Apa Bêsarion: *Father, I am quite thirsty*. The elder prayed and said: *Drink from the sea and the water will be sweet*. I drank and put a little water into the container which I had, thinking: *That I may not be thirsty again*. When the elder saw this, he said to me: *Why have you filled it with water ?* I said: *That I may not be thirsty elsewhere*. The elder said to me: *The God of here is also the God of elsewhere*.'

217. On another occasion he was overtaken by another need. He prayed and crossed the river which is called the One of Gold,⁴ the pomegranate, going on foot until he reached the other bank. I was astonished and prostrated myself before him, saying: 'Do you see your feet, how they walked on the waters ?' He said to me: 'I see that the water comes up to my ankles. It is the ground that is firm.'

218. Another time, on our way to visit another elder as the sun was about to set, the elder begged us, saying: 'I beg you, Lord, may the sun stop until I reach your servant', and it did.

219. Someone with a demon once came to Shiêt and prayers were held for his sake in the church, but the demon did not come out, for he was extremely tenacious. The clerics said: 'What are we to do to this demon ? There is nobody who will be able to remove him except Apa Bêsarion. But if we ask him he will not come to the church. Let us do this: he comes early in the morning before everyone else, so let us cause the sick one to go and sit in his place. When he comes in, let us rise and stand at prayer and say to him: *Father, wake this brother*.' And this is what they did. In the morning, when the elder entered, they stood to pray and said to him: 'Wake this brother.' He said to him: 'Arise and depart.' And the demon left and the man was completely healed at that moment.

⁴ Greek: διέβη τὸν χρυσορῶαν ποταμὸν, using an epithet (LSJ *q.v.*) to describe the Nile ('streaming with gold') attested in a Hymn to Isis (LSJ *q.v.*). Coptic has clearly misunderstood the second part of word as ρῶα 'pomegranate' (ⲉⲣⲙⲁⲛ).

220. The elders said to Apa Elijah in Egypt about Apa Agathon that he was a good brother. The elder replied that he was good for his generation. They said. 'What about earlier generations ?' He replied: 'He is good for his generation. As for earlier generations I saw a man in Shiêt, stopping the sun, like Jesse the son of Naue.' When they heard this, they were very impressed and gave glory to God.

221. A woman with an illness of the breast called cancer heard about Longinus. She sought to meet him when he was in Henaton, which is nine miles from Rakote. The woman set out in search of him. On the way she met him gathering wood on the seashore and said to him: 'Father, where is the servant of God Longinus', for she did not know who he was. He said: 'What do you want with that charlatan ? Do not go to him, for he is a charlatan. What is your problem ?' The woman told him of her illness, and the elder made the sign of the cross over the affected place. He said to her: 'Go, the Lord will heal you. Longinus will not be able to help you.' She went believing what he had said and was cured immediately. Afterwards she told others of the miracle performed by the elder and they told her that it was Longinus who had performed the miracle.

222. Some brought him a man possessed by a demon. He said: 'I am unable to do anything for you. Go to Apa Zênon.' When Apa Zênon prayed, the demon distressed the man all the more and pursued the elder. The demon cried out: 'Do you now think it is because of you I am coming out ? Look, Apa Longinus is over there, praying. He is pursuing me. I am afraid of his prayers. I am coming out. This is why I will not give an answer to you.'

223. It was said about Macarius the Great that he left Shiêt carrying many baskets. When he was tired, he sat down and prayed: 'God, you know I can go no further' and he found himself on the river.

224. There was a man in Egypt who had a paralytic child and brought him and left him at the cell of Apa Macarius, weeping in front of the door, and went far away. The elder looked out and saw the small child and said to him: 'Who brought you here ?' The child said: 'My father brought me, put me down and and went away.' The elder said to him: 'Arise and go

and catch up him.' Immediately he was healed and caught up with his father and they went home rejoicing.

225. Apa Djidjôï said: 'When I was in Shiêt with Apa Macarius we went with him and harvested, seven brothers and a widow following us, gleaning and weeping, and she never stopped weeping. The elder called upon the owner of the property⁵ and said to him: *Why is this old woman weeping ?* He said to him: *While her husband was still alive, some goods⁶ belonging to someone else had been entrusted to him.⁷ He died unexpectedly without saying where he had put them. The depositor wanted his goods back, but she was unable to find them and he wanted to take her and her children as slaves.* The elder said to him: *Tell her to come to the place where we rest in the heat of the day.* When she came, the elder said to her: *Why do you cry the whole time ?* She said: *My husband died having taken someone else's goods and did not say, as he was about to die, where he had left them.* He said to her: *Come, tell us where you buried him.* He took the brothers and went with her. When they came to the place, the elder told her to go home and they prayed. The elder called on the dead man and said: *So-and-so,⁸ where did you leave the belongings of this man ?* He replied: *In my house at the foot of my bed.* The elder said to him: *Go back to sleep until the day of resurrection.* The brothers saw this and fell at his feet. The elder said: *This has happened not because of me, for I am nothing, but because of the widow and these orphans God has done this thing. This is the great thing, that God loves a sinless soul, and everything it asks for, it will receive.* He came and said to the widow: *We have the articles.* She took them and returned them to the owner and, with her children, became free. Those who heard gave glory to God.

226. It was said of Apa Macarius that one day as he was walking in the desert, he found a skull. He moved it with his staff and it spoke. The elder said to it: 'Who are you ?' It said: 'I am the high priest of the pagans⁹ who were in this place. And you are Macarius the spirit-

5 Suggests that they were hired labourers.

6 Starts off here as plural and in the next line becomes singular.

7 It is impossible to know if there was any form of written transaction between the borrower and the creditor. Whatever it was it must have been fairly unobtrusive and valuable. The episode may well of course be pure fantasy.

8 In magical texts sometimes found in the Greek form δεινός/δεινή cf. W. Worrell 'Coptic Magical and Medical Texts' *Orientalia* 4 (1935) text IV line 27.

9 'Hellenes'. The term that indicates Greeks is a form of 'Ionian', which *mutatis mutandis* has passed into Arabic.

bearer at all times. If you are merciful to those in punishment, they will have a little rest.' Apa Macarius said: 'What is rest?' He said: 'As the heaven is far from the earth, so is the fire below us and above us as we stand in the middle of the fire. It is impossible for anyone to see the face of his neighbour, but back is turned to back. When you pray for us, each one for a moment sees the face of his neighbour.' The elder heard this and said: 'Woe to the day when the man was born if this is rest from punishment.' The elder said to him: 'Is there torture worse than this?' The skull said to him: 'The great tortures below us.' The elder said: 'We who did not know God are given a little mercy. Those who knew God and denied Him and did not do His will, they are below us.' The elder then took the skull, dug a hole in the ground, put it there and left.

227. It was said about an elder in Shiêt that he went out to harvest. Some brothers came out and happened upon a murder.¹⁰ They stood over the dead man. Others came and seized them as the ones who killed him. While they were both accusing each other of having killed the dead man, the elder came out, his staff in his hand. When the brothers saw him, they ran up to him in tears, saying: 'Help us, our father' and told him what had happened. He moved his staff against the dead man and said: 'Did these brothers strike you?' The dead man said: 'No.' The elder: 'What did you do?' He replied: 'We, thieves, fought with each other. I was struck. The others left.' The men were astonished. The elder hurriedly ...¹¹ through the miracle which they had seen him perform.

228. Apa Milios, while passing by a cell¹² once, saw a monk ensnared by some men as if he had committed a murder. The elder approached and asked him. When he discovered that that he was being slandered, he said to those holding him: 'Where is the man who has been killed?' and they told him. He approached him and said to them: 'All of you pray.' When he spread out his hands to God, the dead man arose and said to him before them all: 'I went into

10 Coptic translator has read **ϕθονος** (envy) for **ϕονος** (murder)

11 There is no other version of this story to help with understanding this passage: **αϕωμς ρνηνοεικ ετρητ**. Zoega *Codices Coptici* (p. 340) understands **νοεικ** (adulterer) 'hoc loco *incredulus, gentilis*', apparently suggesting that the saint has managed to baptize (**ωμς**) some unbelievers because of this miracle. It is an attractive idea, but it is difficult to understand the following word **ετρητ** (growing, planted), which in any case is not likely to be constructed here with the relative particle **ετ-**. Crum (254) understands **οεικ** as 'reed' and translates 'with modesty he plunged ..., which I do not understand. The only suggestion I can make is **αϕωμς ρνηνοεικ ετρητ ριτην ...** '(hurriedly) baptized (them) in the reeds that were growing there as a result of the miracle ...'

12 Lit. 'place'

the church and gave money to the priest. He attacked me and killed me and brought me to the monastery of this great man. But I call upon you: *Take the money and give it to my children.*'¹³ The elder said: 'Go and sleep until the Lord comes to wake you up', and he went to sleep immediately.

229. A group of elders once went to Apa Poimên. One of them had a son whose face had been turned backwards by the work of a demon. When his father saw the group of elders of our fathers, he carried his son out of the monastery and put him down, sitting and weeping over him. It happened through divine intervention¹⁴ that one of the elders came out and saw him. He said: 'I am a kinsman of Apa Poimên. This small boy was overcome by temptation. We want to take him to the elder but we are afraid, for he does not wish to see us. If he now knows that I am here, he will send and cast me out. When I saw your presence, I made bold to come. As now you wish, be merciful to us. Take the small boy inside and pray over him.' The elder took him and used his intelligence. He did not take him to Apa Poimên, but starting with the youngest of the brothers he said: 'Make the sign of the cross over this boy.' He did so that they might all make the cross in succession. Finally he brought him to Apa Poimên, but he did not wish him to approach him. They all asked him, saying: 'Our father, you too, do as all the brothers have done.' He sighed and prayed, saying: 'God, heal your creature lest he be vanquished by the enemy.' He made the sign of the cross over him and gave him to his father.

230. One of the fathers said about someone called Apa Paulos that he was from Lower Egypt but lived in the Thebaid¹⁵: 'Like this, with his hands he seizes snakes, vipers and scorpions and squeezes the life out of them.' The brothers prostrated themselves before him, saying: 'Tell us what is that you do to receive this grace.' He said: 'Forgive me, my fathers. If one generates purity for oneself, all things come under one's control, like Adam at the time when he was in Paradise before he broke the commandment.'

231. At the time of Julian the Impious, when he went to Persia, he sent a demon to the west

13 Interesting absence of comment about the act of violence committed by the priest

14 Coptic: **OIKONOMIA**, which is often divine.

15 Mod. Luxor and environs

to bring news to him in haste. When the demon reached places where a monk lived, he stayed there for ten days. He did not move. He was unable to walk because the monk did not stop praying day or night. The demon returned to the one who had sent him without having done anything. He said to him: 'Why did you take so long ?' The demon replied: 'I took so long and did nothing because I spent ten days waiting for Apa Publius to stop praying when I might leave, but he did not stop. I was prevented from leaving and I returned, having wasted my time.' The impious Julian then became angry, saying: 'I will deal with him when I get back.' Within a few days he was struck and died through the providence of God. One of the eparchs with him went and sold everything he had and gave the money to the poor. He came to the elder and became a monk with him.

232. A layman and his son once went to Apa Djidjôï when he was in the desert of Apa Antonius and his son died on the way. He was not upset but carried the boy faithfully to the elder and prostrated himself with his son as if in act of obeisance to the elder that he might bless them. The father arose, placed his son at the feet of the elder and left the cell. The elder, thinking that the boy was prostrated to receive absolution, told him to arise and leave, for he did not know that the boy had died. He arose and left immediately. When his father saw this, he was astonished. He went in and prostrated himself before the elder and told him. The elder heard and was very upset, because he did not want to do this. His disciple told them not to say anything of this while the elder was still alive.

233. Abraham the disciple of Apa Djidjôï was tested once by the devil. The elder arose, spread his arms up to heaven, saying: 'God, whether you want or not, I will not leave you until you are healed.' Whereupon he was healed.

234. There was an elder living on the Jordan, an anchorite. He went into a cave during the heat of the day and found a lion there, which began to grind its teeth at him and roared. The elder said to him: 'Why are you upset ? There is enough room here for both of us.¹⁶ If you do not wish to stay with me, arise and leave.' The lion, unable to bear this, left.

¹⁶ Lit. 'to receive me and to receive you too'.

235. It was said of Apa Agathon that he lived in a cave at one time in the desert, with a large dragon in it. The serpent prepared himself to leave. Apa Agathon said: 'If you leave, I will not stay here.' The serpent remained and did not go. There was a sycamore fig¹⁷ in that desert. They went out with each other. Apa Agathon made a cut in the tree and split it with him so that the serpent might eat one side and the elder the other side until they finished eating and went to their cave¹⁸ together.

236. An elder of Shiêt came to Terenoute once and, while he was there, was given a small quantity of wine because of the distress induced by his asceticism. Some heard about this and brought him someone possessed. The demon began to curse the elder, saying: 'It is a wine-bibber they have brought me to !' The elder, humble in his heart, did not wish to cast him out, but because of his insults he said: 'I believe in God that I will not finish drinking this cup if you do not come out.'¹⁹ When the elder started to drink, the demon cried aloud, saying: 'You have burned me.' Before the elder had finished the cup, the demon came out through the grace of God.

237. One of our fathers sent his disciple to draw water, the well being at some distance from the cell. He forgot take the rope with him. When he came to the well, he knew that he had not brought the rope with him. He prayed and called out: 'Well, my father told me to fill this vessel with water.' Straightaway the water came up to the top and the brother filled his pot and the water went back to its place.

17 Well represented tree in pharaonic paintings, probably the so-called 'tree of life' (positioned on the threshold between life and death). It seems that Agathon retrieved a cluster of figs, which was the shared between the two. According to D. Zohary and M. Hopf *Domestication of Plants in the Old World* (2000) p. 185 Egyptians cultivated the tree fairly intensively and the dried fruiting bodies (sycons) found in tombs 'bear characteristic gashing marks, ... which induce ripening ...'

18 Text reads **ⲚⲎⲈⲮⲈⲨⲈ** (of their caves) but I am inclined to think that one has to read **ⲠⲓⲡⲈⲮⲈⲨⲈ** (to their cave).

19 Coptic **ⲈⲚⲦⲏⲈⲓ ⲈⲮⲐⲗ** a form of the circumstantial negated by **Ⲧⲓⲙ** with conditional meaning cf. W. Till *Koptische Grammatik* (1961) §448. 'Chaîne thinks that the Coptic translator has misunderstood the Greek conjunction ἕως οὗ, but there is no Greek text of this saying.

It seems odd that the saint was initially reluctant to cast out the demon and did so only when cut to the quick by his insults. If one removes **ⲗⲈ**, it becomes possible to read the prepositional phrase with the previous part of the sentence: **ⲠⲓⲡⲈⲮⲐⲮⲱⲨ ⲈⲚⲐⲮⲗ ⲈⲮⲐⲗ ⲈⲦⲮⲈⲚⲈⲚⲠⲐⲐⲐⲚⲈⲮ** 'He did not wish to cast him out because of his insults.'

Drawing of elder at prayer amid the words 'An elder praying'. (Book 18)

Concerning the change of practices full of virtue of our holy fathers

238. Apa Doulos said: 'While walking one day in the desert, my father Bêsarion and I, we came to a cave and went in. We found the brother sitting plaiting baskets. He did not look up at us and said nothing to us. The elder said to me: 'Let us go, perhaps the brother is not persuaded to speak to us. ' We left and walked to Sioout²⁰ to speak to Apa John. When we returned²¹ we came to that cave, the place where we had seen the brother, and the elder said: 'Let us go into the cave, perhaps God has persuaded him to speak to us.' When we went in, we found that he had died. The elder said: 'Come, my brother, let us take his body. For God has sent us here here for this reason. ' While preparing him for burial, we found that she was in fact²² a woman. The elder was astonished and said: 'Women have also fought with Satan. They have laid him low in the desert through the power of the cross. We ourselves in the towns we are shameful.' We gave glory to God, who is strong over everyone who loves Him and went forth from that place.

239. Apa Didymus said that Apa Macarius had said: 'I was living once in Shiêt. ²³ Two young strangers came, one with a beard and the other whose beard had just started to grow. They came to me, asking: *Where is the cell of Apa Macarius ?* I asked them what they wanted with him. They replied: *We have heard about him and Shiêt and have come to see him.* I said to them: *I am he.* They prostrated themselves before me, saying: *We wish to remain here.* I saw that, as children of wealthy parents, they were bodily soft and said to them: *You cannot stay here.* The older boy said to me: *If we cannot stay here, we will go*

20 Assiut (Lycopolis) in U. Egypt

21 Typographical error: read **ΣΜΠΤΡΕΝΚΤΟΝ ΑΝΕΙ** ...

22 Lit. **ΣΝΤΕΦΥΣΙΣ** 'by nature'.

23 The following phrase **ΑΥΕΙ ΝΟΙΩΗΤ** is clearly a typographical error and is to be deleted.

elsewhere. I thought: *Why give them a chance to be scandalized by us ?*²⁴ *The harsh life will drive them away.* I said to them: *If you can do it, come and make a cell for yourselves.* They said: *Just show us and we will make it.* The elder gave them only a pickaxe and a basket full of bread and salt. He pointed them in the direction of a (source of) rock and said: *Cut stone here and get wood from the marsh*²⁵ *and make the dwelling place*²⁶ *for yourselves.* I²⁷ thought that they would run away because of the hard work. They asked me what work was done here and I told them that it was basket weaving. I got reeds from the marsh and showed the how to start the basket and how to weave it. I said to them: *Make the baskets and give them to the watchmen*²⁸ *and they will bring you bread.* I withdrew. They patiently did everything I had told them. They never came to me again. Three years later, I was still contending with my thoughts, saying: *Why is that they have not come to ask me for advice. Those who live far away come to me, but they are near and do not come to me, nor do they go*²⁹ *to anyone else. They just come to church, say nothing, receive Communion.* I prayed and fasted for a week so that God would tell me what they were doing. I arose to go to them to see how they were. When I knocked, they opened and greeted me in silence. After praying I sat down. The older brother signalled to the younger to go. He sat and worked at his baskets, without speaking. At the ninth hour he knocked. The younger brother came and prepared a little food. He laid a table, while the older one looked at him, and placed on it three small loaves. He stood, silent. I said: *Arise and let us eat.* We arose and ate. He brought the water container and we drank. When evening fell, they said to me: *Are you going ?* I said to them: *No, I am going to sleep.* They made a bed for me on one side, with theirs on the other side. They took their girdles and belts and put them together and slept on one mattress in my presence. After they had gone to sleep, I prayed to God to reveal to me their work. The roof opened and there was a light like that of midday. They did not see the light. When they thought I was unconscious, the older prodded the younger one. They arose, girded themselves and spread their hands out to heaven. I saw them but they did not see me. I saw demons hovering over the younger one, like flies, some on his mouth and

24 The Coptic has a double negative, which I have removed.

25 H. G. Evelyn White *The monasteries of Nitria and the Wadi Natrun* (1932) p.32ff.

26 The word **ΜΑΝΩΩΠΤΕ** has gone into Arabic as منشوية

27 The independent pronoun is also used, indicating some sort of emphasis.

28 An equivalent Arabic text cited by Crum (738a) describes them as 'porters' محمالين

29 Qualitative. cf. Prov. 8, 20 where the Coptic **ΕΙΒΗΚ** translates ἀναστρέφομαι, used in much the same way as a the habitual Simple Present in English.

others on his eyes. I saw an angel of the Lord with a sword of fire in his hand standing around him and keeping the demons from him. The older brother they were unable to approach. When the time came, they went to sleep. I pretended that I had just woken up. The older brother merely said to me: *Do you want us to recite twelve psalms?* I said: *Yes.* The younger brother recited five psalms of six lines with a single 'alleluia' and at each line a flame came from his mouth and went up to heaven. The same happened to older brother when he started to open his mouth, singing psalms. A great line of fire came from his mouth, reaching up to heaven. I uttered a few 'off-by-hearts' and I left them, saying: *Pray for me.* They prostrated themselves before me, silently. I knew that the elder was 'perfect', and the younger was still struggling with the enemy. Some days later the older brother died. Three days later the younger one died. When some of the elders went to Apa Macarius, he took them to the cell, saying: *Come and see the martyrion of the young strangers.*

240. Apa Sarapion saw a prostitute. He said: 'I will come to you this evening. Make yourself ready.' When he came in to her, he said to her: 'Wait for me a little, for there is something that I must do.' She said: 'As you wish, my father.' He began to sing psalms from the beginning to the 150th Psalm. In each period of silence he knelt three times. She stayed behind him, praying in fear and trembling. He persisted in praying for her that she might be saved. God heard him. The woman prostrated herself at his feet, weeping and saying: 'Please, my father, the place where you know I will be saved, take me there. For this is why God has sent you to me.' He took her to a convent of virgins and said to the mother superior: 'Take this sister and do not impose any yoke or commandment upon her, but let her do as she wishes. Leave her in the Lord. After some time she said: 'I am a sinner. I wish to eat once a day.' Some time later she said 'I wish to eat once a week.' Later she said: 'I have committed many sins. Lock me in a cell and pass me my food and my work through the window.' They did so. She was pleasing to God and went to her rest in that place in the Lord.

241. Two of our fathers asked the Lord to reassure them of the level that they had reached. A voice came to them, saying: 'In a certain town of Egypt there is a layman and his wife called Eucharistos and Maria – you have not yet achieved their level.' They both arose and came to

the town, looked for and found the house of the man and his wife. They said to her: 'Where is your husband?' She said: 'He is a shepherd tending the sheep.' She took them into the house. When evening fell, Eucharistos came back with the sheep and when he saw the elders, he placed a table before them and brought water to wash their feet. The elders said to him: 'We will³⁰ eat nothing until you tell us what your occupation is.' Eucharistos modestly replied: 'I am a shepherd and this is my wife.' They continued to ask him, but he would say nothing. They said: 'It is God who has sent us to you.' When he heard this, he became afraid and said to them: 'These sheep we have from our parents. What God decides for us concerning them, we do it in three portions: one for the poor, another for strangers, and the third we spend on ourselves. From the time when we married, we have not had sexual intercourse. We are still virgins. Each of us sleeps alone, with a sack over us at night, but during the day our clothes are those which are on us. So far no-one knows this.' When they heard this, they were astonished and withdrew from that place.

242. Apa Macarius the Egyptian once came to Nitria from Shiêt on the day of offering of Apa Pambô. The elders persuaded him to say a word to the brothers. He said to them: 'Before I became a monk I lived for a time in my cell in Shiêt and my thoughts disturbed me: *Go the desert and see what you will contemplate in that place.* I continued to struggle with my thoughts for five years, thinking that perhaps the thoughts were of demons. When the thought persisted, I went into the desert and I found there a pool of water with an island in the middle of it. Animals were coming from the desert to drink in that place. I saw in their midst two naked men. My body shuddered with fear, thinking that these were spirits. When they saw that I was afraid, they told me not be afraid because they too were human and asked me where I was from and how I had come to this desert. They told me that they were from a monastery. I asked them where they were from and how they had come to this desert. They said to me: *We are from a monastery. We agreed with each other and came to this desert forty years ago.* One was an Egyptian, the other a Libyan. They asked me: *How is the world? Is the water coming in its time? Is the world abundant as before?* I said to them: *Yes.* I asked them how I would be able to become a monk and they told me that if a man did not reject all the things of the world, he would not become a monk. I said to them: *I am*

30 Typographical error: $\bar{\text{N}}\bar{\text{T}}\bar{\text{N}}\bar{\text{K}}\bar{\text{A}}\bar{\text{O}}\bar{\text{Y}}\bar{\text{E}}\bar{\text{M}}$ for $\bar{\text{N}}\bar{\text{T}}\bar{\text{N}}\bar{\text{N}}\bar{\text{A}}\bar{\text{O}}\bar{\text{Y}}\bar{\text{E}}\bar{\text{M}}$

weak. I cannot be like you. They said to me: If you cannot be like us, stay in your cell and weep over your sins. I asked them: When it is winter, are you not weak ? When it is hot, does your body not burn ? They said: God has arranged these things for us. There is no cold in winter or heat in summer. This is why I said to you that before I became a monk, I went to see other monks. Forgive me, brothers.'

243. It was said of Apa Simeon the Syrian that he spent 60 years on a pillar. He did not eat of the food of men nor was there anyone who knew how he stayed alive. Those around him were in doubt, and they thought that perhaps he was a spirit. Twelve bishops gathered and prayed to God that they might know this. It happened that as they were fasting near him and praying, the holy Apa Simeon spoke to them: 'I too am a man like everyone' and they did not believe and afflicted themselves with ascetic practices. One of them, of a stainless character, saw that he had been placed beside him on the capital of the column, and an angel came from the east with food in his hand that was the food of the angels. When he gave it Apa Simeon, he also gave to the one with him the same food. He bore witness: 'I will be able to taste human food as long as I live because of the power of that food.' When they were all convinced and knew that he was a man of God, he was believed by everyone through the voice of the twelve bishops. They continued to pray at the column at all times until he completed his martyrdom in Christ and he bore witness to everyone who had gone to him to repent that they turn to God through good works. When about to complete³¹ his course, many miracles emanated from his holy body as in the days when he was alive. Many were the cures that came from him and there were very many who had turned to God from paganism and heresy.

244. It was said of one in Egypt, Bane, who lived in the mountain of Houôr.³² He spent eighteen years in an enclosed cell with no light at all, but there was a small yard in front of the door of the cell. He used to eat human food and did not sleep at all until he died. His first life was like this. He was a monk, careful and very ascetic. The archons of his nome were afraid of him because of his life, which intimidated them greatly with its great piety. They used to try to force him to accept money from them and distribute it among the needy. Thus,

31 Coptic: ⲉϥⲛⲁⲗⲟⲕ probably to be understood as ⲛⲧⲉⲣⲉϥⲗⲟⲕ 'when he completed ...'

32 There is a monastery of Apa Bane and Apa Hor not far from each other near Minya in Upper Egypt.

he made his way around the cities and towns, distributing their money to the needy. His purpose was as follows: if he were away from the monastery in order to give alms for ten days in this service, he would ascetically not eat or drink until he had returned to his monastery. He continued in this regime until old age. He later secluded himself and practised a regime of the sort we have just mentioned: he stood until the bones of his legs became like ivory.³³ One day his disciple forced him to cast a lot. He said to him: 'Go up to the desert and bring three small stones. ' He brought them, thinking that they were the lots. He told him about them. There was a bowl of water in his cell. He said: 'Throw them in it.' Each one of the stones floated as the prophet made the iron float on the water, as the Lord will testify.

245. If the brothers asked the elder Apa Abraham about the regime of Apa Bane, he would say to them: 'Bane, his place of residence is not with any flesh.'³⁴ It was testified of him that he lengthened the period Forty Days by three days and these were not difficult for him but he humbled himself not to be the equal of the saints.

246. Apa Bane asked Apa Abraham one day: 'Does a man like Adam in Paradise need to ask advice again ?' Abraham said: 'Yes, Bane. If Adam had asked the angels for advice about eating from the tree, they would have told him not to.'

247. The priest who said Mass for him found him exhausted and pressed him on the matter: 'Why are you so troubled ?' He said: 'The foundation of the earth has ceased³⁵ to exist today.' The priest said: 'What has happened, my father ?' He replied: 'Theodosius the Emperor died today.' When he came forth from him, the priest wrote (a letter) that day. When letters were brought south to him, the day which the elder had said agreed with that in the letters brought.

248. When he came to eat, he used to stand at a wall and eat his bread and do his work

33 Chaîne suggests changing the word in the text. I see no need for this, **ελεφας** providing good sense: 'until the bones of his legs became like ivory.' Ivory has an enamel coating which makes it look smoother and harder than bone. It is certainly more difficult to scratch ivory it is to scratch bone.

34 This seems to mean that his body (**σαρξ**) does not have the same physical needs as the body of others. Chaîne: 'Bane, lui, n' a sa demeure dans aucune chair.'

35 Looks like a misprint; **αγω** for **ογω**.

standing. When he came to sleep, he did so with his chest on the wall that had been made for him for this purpose. The more senior of the brothers would visit him each Sunday. When they came to hear Mass, they would ask him: 'Father, is your heart now more content than when you were feeding large numbers of the poor.' The blessed Apa Bane had borne witness to them: 'The life I spent before I enclosed myself in solitude, whether in ascetic practice or charity work, now seems like sexual profligacy compared with the state I am now in.

249. One day the elders went to Apa Abraham the prophet of the country³⁶ and asked him about Apa Bane, saying: 'We have spoken with Apa Bane³⁷ about the seclusion he is in. His words were very serious - he counted all his former ascetic practices and acts of charity as sexual profligacy.' Apa Abraham replied: 'He is quite right.' The elders became despondent about their lives, for they too were like this. He said to them: 'Why are you so gloomy? When Apa Bane distributes alms, will he feed a town or city or country? He can now raise his hands for barley to descend in abundance upon the whole earth. He can beg God to forgive the sins of this entire generation.' When they heard this, they rejoiced, for they had a leader to pray for them.

250. There was another one in this place called Daniel, prosperous and distinguished, who had learnt the entire Scriptures off-by-heart, the Old and the New and all the canons and decrees of the bishops. It was his intention not to speak at all (and would not have done so) except for a matter of urgent necessity. His ability to recite from memory was sweetness itself: his pronunciation of each of the words was quite precise. It was said of him that he started reciting Jeremiah the prophet, struggled over a word and continued to struggle, wanting to know it, so that it would not pass by without being pronounced. He finished the prophet, saying: 'I have said it.' It was also said of him that he recited 10,000 lines a day. If he takes a little sleep and wakes up, he finds himself reciting and hesitating over the word. Because of this extreme meditation, it has become natural to him, as in the Song of Songs: 'I sleep and my heart is vigilant.'³⁸

36 **ⲭⲟⲡⲁ** often means Egypt outside Alexandria

37 Text reads: Abraham.

38 Song 5, 2

251. It was said of Apa Niran that he was very precise in his words and extremely consistent in his outstanding life. He had spent 60 years in a church saying mass but had never seen the ceiling of the capitals of the columns. He used to say Mass twice a day. We learned this when he died, because his companion in God told us.

252. It was said of Apa Dioscorus that he was a scribe who used to record consignments of wheat. When he became a monk, if anyone told him he was an important man, he would say to them: 'From that one I stole his sack, from this one his basket.' In short, he did this to belittle the glory of the world.

253. It was said that he said: 'God has given me three blessings: a good eye, a place in the cell and physical endurance.'

254. Concerning his clothing, he has a linen robe with a linen cowl and another linen robe for the rule.³⁹ If anyone asks him, he gives one and keeps the other. Concerning his food, he tastes nothing except bread and water. Concerning his sleeping, he does not put a blanket over himself or a skin or anything of the sort. He sleeps on the ground, as we have heard. It is impossible to put oil in his cell.⁴⁰

255. This miracle happened to him at the beginning. He made his way to God to worship Him. His muscles were bleeding because of the ascetic practice of his body. His feet became gangrenous. He did not treat them or tell anyone about them, but wrapped them in bandages until God took him to his rest. His disciple once said to him: 'Put a little boiled saffron on them, but he did not listen.

256. When he was a scribe, he had a single cushion on which he sat. He was not attached to or did not care for things of this sort. If he wrote a book for a man, he would give it to him, and he would give him bread. Or Bane would receive something else he needed. If people

39 Jerome in his preface to the Pachomian Rule says that each monk had two tunics for wearing and a used one for sleeping.

40 I do not understand this.

left him alone, he did not grieve or trouble them. If a brother came to the mountain, he would receive him and showed him the bread pantry,⁴¹ saying: 'Do not be faint. They are ours until God appoints the brother himself.'

257. A lay person received the monastic habit once. He went to him, saying: 'Give me bread.' He put it into his bread basket and brought it to him. The brother did not say: 'Enough.' And the elder decided : 'Unless he says 'enough', I will not stop.' When the bread ran out, apart from a little at the end, he said 'enough', and the elder stopped.

258. A brother once went to him, saying: 'I have not found a door for my cell.' He said to him: 'Take this one out for yourself.' The brother took out the door to the street, carried it off and left. The elder hung up a mat until he had made a door of palms to put in its place.

259. Another astonishing thing performed by him. The priest of the monastery, when he came to say Mass for him, went there often and the elder said said: 'Do not let a woman into the monastery.' The priest said: 'None has come.' The elder said: 'There is one here now.' The priest went to enquire about this and found that it was true.

260. There were two tunics once: the good one set aside and the bad one he was wearing. A stranger came and asked him, and he gave him the good one, the bad one he kept. The priest asked him: 'Why did you not give the bad one and keep the good for attending Mass.' He said to him: 'Will you give the bad one to Jesus ?'

261. It was said of him that the barbarians once came from the east, when he was in the desert. They went to his cell when there was another brother with him. The elder hid the brother. They asked him if there was anyone there and he said that there was not. They then surrounded him and found him. They brought both to their leader, who said to them: 'If you knew we were coming, why did you not run away ?' Apa Dioscorus stretched out his neck. 'If you are going to this man, kill me first.' They said to him: 'We are not going to kill either

41 Variant form of the word in next saying, cf. Crum 254b, where neither form is given. Perhaps an abbreviated form of **οϥομῆ** 'manger' (480a) ?

of you, but ...,⁴² if you hear that we have come, run away' and they released them. When evening came, they came out and came to him and brought his knife to him, for they had taken with the rest of his things and gave it back to him,

262. He once set aside a fine covering for himself. A brother went to visit him and slept in his place and he put the covering over him. The brother desired it and said to him: 'Where did you find this that I may get one like it for myself?' He said nothing until morning and then put the covering over the skin as the brother was about to leave. He said: 'My skin is heavy.' The elder said: 'The little covering which I have given to you, I will find another' and dismissed him.

here

263. This one became ill to the point of death. He spent a number of days ill, but did not let anyone make anything for him nor did he⁴³ But when he came to die, they took two mats and put one over the other until he died. He took their chain and cast it aside, saying: 'Ask the world.'

264. It was said of Apa Hôr that he never lied, swore, cursed any man or even spoke unless he had to.

265. Apa Jijôi was living on the mountain of Apa Antony. The one who served Antony had failed to attend him for up to ten months. While walking in the desert, he found a man of Pharan, stalking the beasts on the mountain to catch them and the elder said to him: 'Where do you come from and how long have you been here?' He said: 'Physically I have been in this desert for eleven months and ...'

266. ... the cave alone. she lying ill. She said: 'I have been here for 38 years in this cave, living on herbs, a servant of Christ. I have never seen anyone except for the day when God sent you to wash my body.' When she said this, she fell asleep. The elders glorified God,

42 Coptic: **ΕΧΙΝΤΑΙ ΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ** 'since this has come forth' or 'since I have come forth'. I do not understand either.
Chaîne: 'allez-vous-en d'ici'.

43 Coptic: **ἮΠΕΡΚΕΧΛΑΛΥ ΖΑΡΟϚ** 'he did not put anything under him'. Presumably to lie on.

washed her body and withdrew.

267. It was said of an anchorite that he came to the desert with only a monastic garment and walked for three days and settled on a rock. Below him was a meadow, with a man walking in the midst of wild beasts. He concealed himself until he came down and caught him. But the elder was naked and unable to bear the smell of human beings ...[c. 2 lines missing] ... and ... wish(ed) ... him and ... But the brother ran behind him. He cried out, saying: 'I am running to you because of God. Stand there for me.' He turned and said to him: 'I am running from you because of God.' Finally he threw away his garment and ran after him. When he saw that he had thrown aside his clothes, he ran after him and stood before him. When he approached him, he said to him: 'Since you have cast aside the matter of the world, I too have stood for you.' He called upon him : 'My father, tell me how I am to be saved.' He said: 'Run from people, say nothing and you will be saved.'

268. An anchorite spoke with his brothers who were in Elim,⁴⁴ the place of the seventy date palms, the place where Moses gladly walked with his people when they left Egypt, and said to them: 'I once thought of going to the inner desert, for I will surely find someone ealse living there. a servant of Jesus Christ.' And I walked for four days and found a cave. I looked inside and saw a man sitting. I knocked, as monks do, for him to come out and greet me. He did not move. For he had died. I did not wait but went inside and took him by the shoulders. He immediately he crumbled into dust. I looked and saw a tunic⁴⁵ hanging. I seized it, and it too fell apart. I was uncertain about what to do. I came out and walked in the desert until I found another cave, with traces of human footprints. I took heart and approached the cave. I knocked, but nobody answered. I went in and found it was empty. I stood outside the cave thinking it was time for the servant of God to come here. When daylight ws almost gone, I saw a herd of buffalo coming and the servant of God with them, naked, his hair covering his private parts. When he came near, he thought I was a spirit who had stood there to pray. For he had often been tried by spirits. I said to him: 'I am a man, a servant of God. Look at my footprints on the ground and touch me, for I am flesh and blood.' When he had finished, he looked at me, was consoled and led me into the cave ...

44 Ex. 15,27

45 κολόβιον : sleeveless or short-sleeved tunic

269. ... adorned with humility,
for his eyes to be cast down but his soul to be in heaven the whole time,
for him to remain aloof from disagreement and be obedient to the good and painstaking at
his work,
for him to be focused on the final things and rejoice at all times in hope.

It is also fitting for him
to pray without interruption,
to be thankful for everything,
to be strong in tribulation,
to be humble before everyone,
to keep himself from all thoughts of defilement,
to hate the pride hated by God,
to be sober in all things,
to turn his eyes from physical beauty,
to live steadfastly in continence at all times,
to eat in poverty,
to gather for himself his treasure in heaven through the commandment of mercy,
to wear his clothing in poverty,
to examine every day what he is going to do day and night.

It is also fitting for him
not to contaminate himself with things of this life or
strive after the life of the neglectful and the dissolute, but
aim for the life of his holy fathers and
be with those who have achieved virtue and
not ... ⁴⁶ in anything,
to take trouble with those who have fallen and

⁴⁶ Spelling makes it difficult to recognize the word: **Νῆϋτῆσπονι**. The only verb I can see in Crum (461a) is **τῆπο** 'accompany', but it yields little sense and does not help to explain **-νι**.

to weep over them, and
not to castigate those who have turned from sin and
not to censure them.

It also fitting for him
not to rebuke himself but
to confess his sins before God and man,
to teach the ignorant
to comfort the timid,
to minister to the sick,
to wash the feet of the saints,
to care for exiles and brothers,
to be at peace with his friends in faith,
to remain aloof from all heretics and enemies.

The one who does these things is a monk.

270. Apa Elijah of Shiêt said: 'When I went to Shiêt, I asked Apa Hierax: 'Let me stay with you and be your disciple.' He said to me, as a test: 'Will you hear what I am about to say to you ?' I said: 'Yes,of course.' He lit a fire and said to me, testing me: 'If you want to be a disciple of mine and are prepared to obey me, put your hand into this fire.' I put my hand into the fire and left it there. It would have become black if he had not seized it and removed it. I did not take it away.' He showed us the scar on his hand.

271. Apa Elijah was asked: 'With what are you to be saved in this time ?' He said: 'We will be saved by not taking account of you ?'⁴⁷

272. It was said of a brother that he went to an elder and said to him: 'I want a small cell.' The elder said: 'Wait here and I will go find one for you. ' The brother waited in the place where he had left him and the elder went off for three years. Three years later the elder came

⁴⁷ Seems a rather withering slight. Elijah is described in *PG* 65: 185 as a 'hesychast', but I do not know if this was significant at this period, and his tone to the one seeking advice from him seems somewhat dismissive.

in and found the brother in the place where he had left him. The brother had not gone to any other part of the cell. The elder was very impressed with his ...