

***THE LIFE OF  
APA JOHN KHAME***

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**(Cod. Vat. Copt. LX; Pat. Or. T. 14 Fasc. 2)**

**Translated by**

**Mary Hayes Davis**

**1919**

*St. Pachomius Library*



**Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ King of Kings and  
Lord of lords**



*H.H. Pope Shenouda III, 117th Pope of  
Alexandria and the See of St. Mark*

## THE LIFE OF ST. JOHN KHAME

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### INTRODUCTION

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Coptic text of the Life includes the following manuscript colophon in Arabic:

*"A gift unto the library of the holy Abu Makar. And whoso shall bring it forth from the keep unto another cell, or unto another place without the keep, or shall borrow it and not return it, or shall appropriate it unto himself without... [illegible] of Abu Makar, the same shall be under ban and excommunication and his portion shall be with Judas Iscariot. And he that taketh and he that giveth (a bribe) that it may be brought away, they both shall be under this same bond. And the humble Paul wrote (it), the minister of (the church of) Abu Shenoudah, in Bebig(?), Year 971 (= A.D. 1255)."*

The following chronological notes have been kindly contributed by Mr. H. G. Evelyn-White:

"The date of John Khame is not very easy to determine. The Coptic Life (fol. 110 v) refers to his monastery as fifth among the convents of the Wadi Natrun in order of foundation, and he is therefore later than the fourth century. On the other hand the first direct mention of the Monastery of Khame is found in the **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

connection with Gabriel I (913-923 A.D.): *'When he (Gabriel) was a young man, he had entered the desert and become a monk in the Wadi [Habib] at the monastery of St. Macarius, at a cell there named after the Syrian, that is to say, the father Kama, brother of John in the monastic life.'* The context of this passage, which implies that Khame was a Syrian and not an Egyptian, shows that the cell was then no longer a modern foundation. But this long period can be substantially reduced.

"On the one hand the *History of the Patriarchs* regularly refers to 'the four monasteries' of the Wadi Habib in the time of Damianus, showing that Khame's monastery was not yet established at the close of the sixth century; on the other, mention is made of 'the seven monasteries' during the patriarchate of Shenouti I (859-890), at a time when Ahmed ibn Mohammed al-Mudabbir was minister of finance (856-866). The date of Khame lies therefore between ca. 580 and 860. This again may be reduced: reference is made in the *Coptic Life* (fol. 99) to the instruction of Khame in the 'canon of the Synaxis', according to the commandments of Agatho the Stylite. Khame was therefore later than Agatho the Stylite, who, as a disciple of Abraham and George and a younger contemporary of John the Hegumen, is to be dated at the end of the seventh or beginning of the eighth century.

"Khame lived therefore after ca. 700 and before ca. 850.

"Less trustworthy evidence may carry us even further. Great stress is laid in the *Life* on the inviolable state of the monastery (fols. 406 v, 107, 121). If this is fact, then the convent can hardly have existed in the last days of Mark III (799-819), when all the monasteries were sacked; and consequently Khame must have lived in the ninth century.

This being so, it seems likely that considerable importance should be attached to the evidence of the colophon to a Coptic MS. in the Vatican, which prays the reader to remember 'the poor sinner who wrote (it), Jacob, the son of my father Shenouti, son of John Khame.' If Khame is to be assigned on other grounds to the ninth century, it is hardly doubtful that the Shenouti of this colophon is the Shenouti described in the Life as succeeding Khame as superior of the monastery (fol. 114). It is then possible to date Khame's floruit at ca. 850."

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## THE LIFE OF APA JOHN KHAME

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A portion from the life and the polity of our blessed and Spirit-endued father and ..... *gennophoros, theophoros* [Godclad], *stavrophoros* [cross bearing], revered priest, Abba John Khame, for a profit unto every one that shall hear it. And moreover the day whereon he went to rest the 25th of the month Khoiak. In the peace of God. Amen.

Well indeed hath our good Saviour already said in the holy gospel, *Ye are the light of the world. A city cannot be hid that is set on a hill. Neither do (men) light a lamp and put it under a bushel; rather they set it on the candlestick, that it may give light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven.* [Matt. 6:14-16] In very deed the light of our blessed father, Abba John Khame hath attained unto the gates of heaven and the sweet savour of his virtues hath reached unto the throne of God and the angels and all the saints have rejoiced at his honour. The life of our blessed father gave forth shining splendour, even as the shining rays of the sun, giving light unto the uttermost ends of the earth.

The sweet savor of his virginity hath spread abroad as the sweet smell of the rose in the month Pharmouthi. He was choicer than spices, he was a holy gift unto the Lord, of more value than pearls and precious stones. The Lord



sanctified him from [the time] when he was in the womb. His name hath won renown in all the world, and hath become a sweet-smelling ointment in all the churches. For this cause hath my soul loved him, and therefore I desire, O my beloved, to set moving the instrument of my feeble tongue, that I may tell some few things from the Life of our blessed and holy father, John Khame. When I consider his lofty good deeds, I am afraid and tremble, more especially when I know the poverty of my understanding and the weakness of my tongue. But the prayers of our holy father raise up my feebleness, he that is in our midst today, rejoicing with us on the day of his festival, encouraging us that we may tell particularly his holy Life.

Then hear me with attention, O my beloved, ye God-loving people, for I would bid you today to a kingly feast, I would set before you a kingly table and a spiritual that I might feed you with a heavenly food, which is the Life that is full of encouragement of our ..... *panemphios* [?] father. Seeing that I am not myself fitted to do this, but rather I liken myself unto the poor widow, that did cast two mites into the treasury [Mk. 12:42, Lk. 21:2], therefore will I betake myself unto the preface and will tell clearly (?) that which the Holy Spirit shall furnish unto us through the prayers of our holy and all-saintly father, Abba John Khame, according as our fathers have told us.

Now this holy man of whom we tell was of a village which is called Jepromounonson, in the nome of Sais, and he gave himself unto virtue from his childhood. He was sweet in his nature and unto all men mild, zealous in virtue and prudent in his words, sober in his judgment,

pure in his body, sanctified in his soul, good toward all men, a lover of charity, a lover of strangers, righteous in his soul, wise and of understanding, righteous in all his ways, devout in the faith, going early to the church of Christ, fasting at all times, praying continually, meditating the name of our Lord Jesus Christ with great fervour by day and by night, keeping his body in subjection, making it the servant of his soul, withdrawing himself from all worldly cares and from thought of the matter and ease of this life and from the deceit of the flesh bringing to naught his sin-loving .... , forgetting the things of this life for they swiftly pass away, and eager for the age of light and the inheritance of the righteous. He was adorned with all good things by the gift of the Holy Spirit; in a word he served the Lord with all his might, keeping the commandments of our God-clad [*theophoros*] father Abba John.

It is told us concerning him that while he was yet a youth and continuing in these good works that we have recorded and more than these, he was betrothed unto a maiden, a virgin, that he should take her to wife, according to the laws of nature. And when they had made the marriage feast for him and her, as was befitting, they set him with her within the bride-chamber and they closed the door. But the righteous man, our holy father, spread forth his hands and prayed unto the Lord, desiring him to give him strength in that which he had it in mind to fulfil. And he said: "'Lord God of hosts I was cast upon thee since I was in the womb, thou art my God since I was in the belly of my mother, [Ps. 21(22):10]. Grant unto me, my Lord, that I may be in the purity of virginity unto the end and grant unto thy servant also, she that hath been bidden with

me, that she may be worthy of the lot of the five wise virgins, [Matt. 25:1-13]. Glory (be) unto thee for ever. Amen."

And his bride looked and saw the holy man standing and his hands spread forth and his ten fingers were as it were ten lamps of fire and she was in fear and trembling. Then the righteous man called unto her and said mildly unto her:

"Come near unto me, that I may speak with thee, according to the love of Christ, for the salvation at once of thy soul and of mine also, according as Christ hath said in the holy gospel: 'None hath aught greater than this love, that one lay down his life for his friend,' [John 15:13]. Seeing that we are united one to another in a union after the flesh for the begetting of children in sorrow of heart [Gen. 3:16] yet if thou wilt hearken unto me, we will unite together in a spiritual union for the begetting of virtues. For seeing that we have been united one with another in the cares of life, if thou wilt hearken unto me, we will unite ourselves in an immaterial union. Let us depart far from the sweetness of the flesh which is for a time, that we may be set free in the day of the true judgement. If so be that we keep our virginity and our bodies pure, we shall ourselves be made together worthy of the inheritance of the righteous. For the man that hath married a wife and the woman that hath married a husband have taken thought for the things of this life, that they might please one another; but they that have not married have taken thought for the things of the Lord, that they might please him [cf. I Cor. 7]. It were good for us therefore that we should despise the things of the earth and seek after those of heaven, that we should

**renounce the things of a season and seek after those of eternity.**

**"Instead of the bride-chamber of this world, we should be made worthy of the bride-chamber that is in heaven. In exchange for the gladness and the perfume of our bridal state that shall pass away, we may be made worthy of the ointment of heaven and the oil of the gladness, that which floweth forth from the church of the first-born. In exchange for the children that we should beget in the flesh, we shall become the children of God and the companions of his angels and shall rejoice with the five wise virgins, they that trimmed their lamps and went in unto the feast with the bridegroom, [Matt. 25:1-13]. The earth shall swiftly pass away and the glory of it, gold shall perish and silver rust, the beauty of the body shall perish and shall be dissolved in the tomb, but 'he that doeth the will of God shall abide for ever,' [1 John 2:17]."**

**Now when she heard these things, his blessed bride -- for she was indeed blessed by reason of her good disposition -- became filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit and she cast herself upon the ground and worshipped God. And she said:**

**"Glory unto thee, O Christ, that thou hast not deprived me of the aim of my soul's zeal. Thou hast granted me the desire of my soul and of the prayer of my lips thou hast not deprived me [Ps. 20(21):2]. In exchange for suffering, thou hast given me rest; for sorrow of heart thou hast given me gladness; for bondage, freedom; for things perishable, things imperishable; for the things of the earth, the good things that are in heaven; in**

exchange for death, thou hast given me life eternal. Thou hast illuminated me, my Lord, by means of thy servant, him whom thou hast already chosen from (the time) that he was in his mother's belly, that he might call many in unto thy [MS `his'] kingdom; for thine is the glory for ever. Amen."

Then she laid hold of the feet of our holy father and kissed them, saying after this manner: "Blessed be the hour wherein I met thee and the day wherein thou wast born, O thou holy one of God. Verily, thou hast given unto me honour and hast glorified me; thou hast given life unto my soul. So then, if thou hast set it in thy heart, O my beloved brother, that thou shouldst keep thy virginity, I likewise rejoice that I should keep mine also. For thou, O my beloved brother, art lord of my body, according to the saying of Paul, the apostle [1 Cor. 7:4], and art agreed that thou shouldst be a virgin, so I too am ready to obey thee unto the day of my death. For seeing that thy sweet words have made fat my bones and have entered in unto the senses of my soul, so have I also understood them aright with the understanding ears of my heart, those things concerning which our Lord Jesus Christ spake in the holy gospel, saying: `He that hath ears to hear, let him hear'."

And when the blessed John heard these things from the blessed woman he rejoiced the more and gave glory unto God. And they made a covenant together, they twain, in the presence of the Lord, that they should keep their virginity according to the agreement of their heart.

Great indeed is thy honour, O our holy father; thy name is filled with perfume in heaven and upon the earth. Well

**hath David said in his prophecy, speaking of thy honour, "He that maketh a solitary to dwell in a house," [Ps. 67 (68):6]. Verily was this saying fulfilled in these blessed ones. O, who shall tell of the great courage of our holy father and the purity of his heart, of the firmness of his reason and of his great continence and his wondrous uprightness? For at this time there is no man shall be able thus to contain himself. Lo, I myself marvel that thy thoughts have not troubled thee, being in this same house with this woman. Who shall approach a fire and shall no be burnt, who is he that hath walked like thee upon coals of fire and hath not known [Cf. Prov. 6:27-28]? Who hath conquered pleasures as thou didst?**

**For thou hast trampled on all the passions of the flesh, for thou didst become a temple of the Holy Spirit [1 Cor. 6:19], according to the saying of the Lord: "The wind bloweth where it listeth," [John 3:8]; that is to say thou, O our all-saintly father. Therefore, didst thou extinguish the flame of fornication, and of thee also hath the Lord said: "There be men that have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven," [Matt. 19:12]. Let them be ashamed now that defile their bodies with pollutions and with unnatural sins, when they hear concerning our holy father, that he had not intercourse with his wife.**

**Now after these things a wondrous marvel came to pass. God commanded and caused a vine to spring up in the bride-chamber laden with fruit and spreading forth in the whole house. And this happened for a faithful proof, and a testimony to the purity of life of our most saintly holy father, and of his lofty good deeds. When our holy father John and his wife saw this marvel, they were the more established in the love of Christ, giving thanks unto**

the Lord and glorifying him in praisings and in blessings, by day and by night, at all hours, being in great gladness and praising God, like the angels.

And after all these things it came to pass in the night that he saw in a vision, the while he stood in prayer, a man of light, and he spake with him saying: "Be not neglectful of this ministration unto which thou art called through the Lord God. When thou risest on the morrow, betake thee to Shihet (Scetis), to the desert of our father Abba Macarius, and enquire after the dwelling of my father Teroti and become a monk with him and wear the habit of the angels, for that blessed old man is righteous and fitted for the salvation of many souls. For this is the will of the Lord".

When he arose at dawn, our holy father called unto his bride and said unto her: "I bid thee farewell, my good sister, for I am bidden of the Lord to depart and become a monk. Thou also, O my beloved sister, do thou apply thyself to the salvation of thy soul. So I bid thee farewell until we see one another in the kingdom of heaven." When she heard these things from the holy one, she was in great sorrow of heart, and said unto him: "I pray thee, O my lord brother, that thou wouldest remember me in thy prayers, that the Lord may order my whole life according as it pleaseth him." And the holy one said unto her: "Be of good courage, the Lord shall not forsake thee."

And he saluted her and departed from her in peace and betook him to the high-road, the grace of God assisting him, until he came to the holy *topos* of our divinely-speaking and most pious, holy father, Abba Macarius,

**the all-virtuous champion, the chief of monkhood, the measure of virtue, the staff of age, the completion of the priesthood, he that was found worthy of the blessedness of the promises, according to the interpretation of his name. And he enquired and was shown the dwelling of our holy cross-bearing father, my father Teroti.**

**When he knocked at the door, after the custom of the monks, the porter opened unto him the door, and said unto him: "What desirest thou, my son?"**

**He said unto him: "If it be the will of God, I desire to become a monk."**

**And the porter told the old man concerning him and he caused him to be brought in in gladness. For unto our holy father, Abba Teroti, it had been revealed of the Lord, he telling him of the coming unto him of our righteous father. And when he saw him, giving forth splendour by the grace of the Lord, he gave glory unto God and received him with great willingness. And he said unto him: "Wherefore this haste that thou hast made (to come) unto us, O my son?"**

**Our holy father made answer with humility, his face cast down, saying: "I came hither, O my holy father, that I might remain under the shadow of thy prayers, and entreat the Lord because of my sins."**

**Then our holy father, Abba Teroti, desired to prove him and he said unto him: "It befitteth the monk that he be withdrawn from all things evil and straitened as to all comforts of this world, even unto his speech."**



**The holy man John said unto him: "I trust in thy prayers that thy heart shall have satisfaction in me."**

**And thus he put upon him the holy habit, knowing that this thing was from God, and he gave him a place apart where he might be in quiet. And he visited him, imparting unto him the word of the Lord and the holy service of those that had become renowned in virtue and the canon of the holy Synaxis of the hours, that he should pray every hour, according to the commandment of our father, Abba Agathon, the stylite, and that he should contend with the evil spirits of wickedness and vile passions and bring them to nought by the strictness of continence. So our holy father, Abba John, received all the words of the old man with great submission, increasing in grace daily by the loftiness of his polity and the laborious exercises that he performed (both) in secret and openly. And when the holy old man Teroti learnt of his virtues, he glorified God, and so commended him before all men.**

**Now after these things it befell of an evening, the while our all-saintly father John was standing at prayer, that he beheld an angel of the Lord, standing before him in glory. And he said unto him: "Peace be unto thee, thou servant of God. When thou risest in the morning, come forth from this place and go unto the cell of the great light Abba John. Go thou toward the west, far removed from all dwellings and make there a dwelling and live therein. For these things saith the Lord: 'I will give thee an inheritance in that place, I will gather unto thee much people and thou shalt lead them unto the angelic work and thou shalt be to them a leader and the saviour of their souls. And there shall be for thee a holy**

community, and by thy name it shall be called. Thy name shall be renowned in all the world. The Lord shall give unto thee a lot in these deserts, because thou hast walked in the footprints of those that are become famous on this mount, and that have become rulers for them that have dwelt in the wilderness, namely the great Abba Macarius and Abba John, Abba Pishoi, and Maximus and Dometius, and seeing that thou hast striven after their likeness, thou shalt be with them in the same resting-place, in the kingdom of heaven. And I will visit thee, according to the commandment of the Lord and thy name shall be called John Khame, that thou mayest fulfil all the will of the Lord."

And when he had said these things unto him, the angel departed from him and appeared unto his spiritual father and related all these things unto him. But when morning came, our righteous father arose and went unto our holy father, Abba Teroti, and told him those things that had been said unto him. And his father said unto him: "Go thou and fulfil the will of the Lord; for the Lord shall do unto thee all things of which the angel spake unto thee."

Therefore our holy father John Khame besought his father that he would bless him, and the holy old man Abba Teroti blessed him, even as Isaac blessed Jacob, [Gen. 27], saying: "The Lord God shall bless thee that thou mayest fulfil his holy will. Amen." And when our holy and all-saintly father had received his father's blessing, he journeyed, rejoicing, until he came to the place concerning which the angel had told him and he made there a cave, shutting himself within it and singing this psalm, saying: "'Thou hast set my feet upon a rock

**and established my footsteps, thou hast put a new song in my mouth, and a blessing unto our God. Amen.'" [Ps. 39(40):2-3]**

**O who shall tell the lofty virtues of this righteous man and the combats wherein he conquered, which, if one should hear them, he would tremble! It is said also concerning our holy father that he wearied himself in his exercises beyond many of our fathers because of his strictness, and they bear witness concerning him that he was exalted in his polity, even as Elijah the Tishbite. Farther, is it said of him that when he stood at prayer he was wont to bend the knee with great effort without interruption, as though he formed a ring, until the sweat of his body flowed down upon his feet like water, as though one should bathe himself therein and wet his whole body. For he made many thousand obeisances, such that if one should write them, he would not be believed of them that are without faith, for whose sake the wrath of God cometh. [Eph. 5:6]**

**But wherefore speak I thus? for indeed ye do all bear witness with me to those things that I tell. In truth, O my beloved, I am as one in a great and boundless sea without means to reach the shore, because of the great virtues of our all-saintly father, John Khame. For indeed mine is a tongue of flesh and sinful lips; I am not able to tell of his honour. Yet when I see your eagerness and how gladly ye desire to hear his Life, I myself take courage the more, my heart rejoices in gladness. Verily, O my beloved, ye Christ-loving people, I am as sounding brass and a clanging cymbal, [1Cor 13:1] when I speak of the good deeds of our God-clad father, John, he whose life and whose virtues may be likened unto those of the**

great Antony, and especially all his acts, which shine as the stars of the morning, so that when I remember them I am at a loss and fearful and my mind is amazed. But I too shall say spiritually with the holy prophet David: "O Lord, open thou my lips and my mouth shall speak thy blessing." [Ps. 50(51):15].

It is told also concerning our all-saintly father, that many times he would not eat from Sabbath to Sabbath, but at other times he would not eat save every forty days. Many a time he would retire to the desert and be in quiet by himself, in austerities not to be described. Further they bear witness concerning him that he slept not, by day or by night, save only for a brief slumber, leaning against the wall, after which he would arise swiftly and would sing in this psalm, saying : "I will not give sleep to mine eyes, nor slumber to mine eye-lids, nor rest unto my temples, until I find a place for the Lord and a dwelling-place for the God of Jacob," [Ps. 131(132):4-5]. And thereby his soul and his mind shone forth, and his face shone through the power of the Holy Spirit which rested within him, because of his purity ; according as our Lord Jesus Christ, our good Saviour hath said in the holy gospel : "He that heareth my words and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me my father will love him and we will go unto him and make our dwelling within him," [ cf. 1 John 3:22-24].

It is told also concerning our holy father John, that all things that the brethren did, whether a deed of virtue or other matter, he would see them in secret. For this cause therefore, was his name renowned everywhere. O who may tell the number of the manifestations and the mysteries and the revelations that he saw from time to

time? For oftentimes he would see the glory of the Lord upon the altar as it were a fire and would hear the angels singing the Trisagion at the time of the holy Anaphora. It is also told of our holy father John that oftentimes there appeared unto him the holy Theotokos Mary, she who bare for us our Lord Jesus Christ, our true king, and she gave him peace and comforted him.

Now it befell in the holy night of the Lord's Day, the he stood performing his Synaxis, that the holy Theotokos Mary came in unto him in great and unspeakable glory and a multitude of angels accompanied her. He fell upon his face from fear, but the Theotokos raised him and said unto him: "Peace be unto thee, John, beloved of my son Jesus, and of his good Father and of the Holy Spirit. Be of good courage and steadfast and become a mighty man, having great endurance, fighting against the evil hostile spirits, that contend with thee. And lo, I am with thee until thou shalt overcome them all and their evil *kataxia* and fulfill all the will of my Son. Further I will establish (my) covenant with thee and will preserve my mercy for thee; for I will abide in this place with thee, because I love it; and it shall become for thee a holy community, and there shall be unto thee multitudes of children and they shall call it by my name ; and the blessing of my Son and his peace and his protection shall abide in thy community. The angels shall visit they monastery and shall watch over they children, that no traitor break through the walls of thy dwelling-place for ever. As long as thy children walk in thy ways and do thy bidding and keep they commandments and thy laws and love one another in charity and remain in purity and righteousness, I will abide with them for ever and I will bless their ministration and their handiwork and they

**shall inherit eternal life with thee in the kingdom of heaven." [Cf. 3 Kings 9:1-6]**

**And she gave unto him three gold solidi having upon them the sign of the Cross and said unto him: "Take these and put them in the purse of the ministry (and) the blessing of my Son shall be in it for ever." (It is said, Behold, these lie in the monastery even unto this day.)**

**When she had said these things unto him, she wished him peace and filled him with strength and she was hidden from him in great glory. But our righteous father was in great gladness by reason of the words the holy Theotokos Mary had said unto him and there came upon him a still greater power. And he sang saying: "I have sought after thy face O Lord, thy face O Lord have I sought. Turn not thy face away from me, be unto me a helper, forsake me not, that I may fulfill thy will, O Lord my God, Amen."**

**It is told also regarding him that at the time when they were building the wall of the monastery and the towers, the angels of the Lord would help them in all their labours by the commandment of God; but especially the most high power of God was a fellow worker with them, through the mediation of the holy Theotokos Mary. And the name of our holy father John became renowned in all places, so that everyone blessed him as prophet and as teacher in his generation because he crucified his flesh and his desires and his thoughts. All his cares he made the servants of our Lord Jesus Christ, our God, bringing forth the fruits of the Holy Spirit in love and gladness, and rejoicing and peace and long suffering and kindness, and goodness and faith and meekness and temperance.**

**These things not only did he (himself) perform, but to everyone he taught that they should do them, saying unto them: "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. He that soweth unto his flesh shall reap also of the flesh corruption, (but) he that soweth unto the Spirit shall also of the Spirit reap eternal life," [Gal. 6:7,8]. Verily, O our holy father, thou hast both sown and reaped spiritual fruit. Thy fruits are increased unto thee an hundred and sixty and thirty fold, [Matt. 13:8]!**

**I desire, then, O my beloved, to relate unto you concerning the destiny of his blessed wife. Now it befell, when our holy father John departed from her and went into the desert, that she arose swiftly and distributed all she had to the poor and she shaved the hair of her head and became a nun. And she practiced many austerities and exercises in great number, so that her name was greatly renowned and there gathered unto her a multitude of virgins and they became nuns under her. And she built for them a nunnery and became a ruler over them. And she assisted them in good works and in the ways of the Lord, and thus became a leader for the salvation of many souls unto eternal life. And the virgins began to increase in number, the grace of God assisting them. And the blessed woman was the servant of the Lord and she increased in her days and went to rest at the Lord's pleasure, through the prayers of our holy father, Abba John. And lo, these others also our God-clad father John brought in as gifts unto the Lord. Many indeed are the souls that thou hast saved from the evil devilish enemy, by thy holy prayers!**

**What tongue of flesh or what heart of man shall tell of thy uprightness and thy glory in the measure of thy**

honour, and of thy constancy toward God? Even be it one whose heart is pure as are the angels and his mind like unto the incorporeal, yet shall he not be able to tell the fullness of thy honour and the glory that the Lord hath given unto thee, in heaven and upon the earth ; even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath said in the holy gospel: "He that glorifieth me, him will I glorify," [an inexact quotation of John 17:10?]. For this cause I would indeed be silent, yet fear I lest I come under the charge of the wicked servant that hid in the ground the silver of his lord. Therefore will I be instant and prolong the discourse and will tell other few things from his upright deeds and the boundless victories of his austerities, such that should one tell them all, the discourse would be greatly extended. But we will leave aside many, choosing to tell some few, reminding you, O my beloved, that he became famous in the holy deserts and a teacher in his generation even as Paul, that became the thirteenth of the apostles. Thus it was that our holy father, Abba John Khame, became the fifth in the holy *topoi* that were in Shehit [Scetis] by the commandment of the Lord.

But after these things, while yet our holy father John dwelt in the cave, meditating the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ, our God, with prayers unceasing and secret petitions beyond telling --- for no man knew the fulness of the sufferings that he endured, for he fled from the vain glory of men --- it befell, when the evil demons saw his perfectness, they armed against him in troops and dark hosts, thinking to bring him down from the height of virtue and attacking his mind with evil thoughts unceasingly, by day and night and terrifying him with phantom forms. But the righteous man pursued after them all with the holy sign of the Cross.



**And when God saw his great endurance, he gave him rest from all thoughts.**

**And when many had heard concerning him and his virtues, a great multitude gathered about him, and they besought him that he would put upon them the habit of monkhood. And there were (given) unto him many children and he formed them into a community that they should build a dwelling-place. And they built a great ocean of dwellings and high towers and walls firmly established. And the brethren began to increase more and more and he taught them, for the salvation of their souls, that they should keep the unity of the right faith and should love prayer and fasting and love one another and keep the purity of their body and soul and that they should be lovers of the poor and lovers of charity and should love solitude and should put before them at all times the fear of the Lord. And he established for them canons and holy laws and set up for them a meeting-place, where they should meet together in the middle of the night and should sing psalmody and spiritual songs until the light of dawn. And he bade them moreover one and all that they should pray each one apart. And by these (rules) and some others also the which he delivered unto them he caused them all to wax hot in godly zeal.**

**It is told also concerning our holy father that while yet he stood singing with the brethren by night, our father Abba Athanasius the apostolic appeared unto him and said unto him: "Peace unto all thy children and unto them that obey thy laws. The sweet smell of thy prayers hath mounted up into the presence of God, as a remembrance for thee for ever, and thy name shall endure to all generations." And when our father Abba**

**Athanasius had said these things unto him he was hidden from him. Therefore was the holy man glad and he commanded his children that they should name the name of our father Abba Athanasius in the hymn of the Three Holy Children; and they do his bidding even unto this day, to the glory of God.**

**Now the first of his children he made of the order of disciples unto him, and these are their names: our father Shenouti the completion of the collecting together of his congregation; and my father Papa Mark, his successor after him, and my father Coluthus, and my father the deacon George, and my father Anthony, and my father George, of whom is born witness that they were worthy of the grace of the holy Spirit. And if one should begin to tell the fulness of their good deeds, the discourse would increase greatly.**

**And moreover after these things they laid hold of (?) our holy father, and consecrated him priest against his will. When he was standing before the sanctuary and began the holy Anaphora, a glory of the Lord came upon the altar, as it were a fire. And when our holy father saw this sight, he glorified God.**

**And after these things our holy father was told by the angel that stayed by him that he should go unto the parts of Southern (Egypt), for the salvation of other multitudes of souls together, after the manner of our father Abba John and our father Abba Pishoi, the great lights. And our holy father called unto one of his children, namely our father Shenouti, his successor after him, and said unto him: "My son, I am called of the Lord to a ministry. Lo, I entrust to thee the brethren, do**

**thou stand in this place and direct the brethren until I return unto thee by the will of God."**

**And by the grace of God he departed unto Southern (Egypt), the help of God guiding him, and he found a *topos* and dwelt therein. O who can recount the austerities that he practised there? And when the men of that place saw his virtues, there came multitudes unto him and became children unto him, and the name of that *topos* is called 'Papa John Khame' even unto this day.**

**But his disciple, being obedient unto his father, stood upon his feet all the days that our father passed in Southern (Egypt), standing in the place wherein our father left him when he departed from him, showing endurance and directing the house, so that his body swelled like unto a pillar and the brethren besought him that he would sit a little and rest himself. (But) he consented not and the brethren set some stones about him, and he remained standing in great obedience; even as our holy father, Abba John Pake, when Apa Paphnouthius said unto him: "Wait thou for me that I may drink water," and forgot him and departed unto the harvest and left Abba John standing, so that he passed the whole summer through; and he came and found him standing in the place where he had said to him "Wait thou for me."**

**But when the Lord saw the faith of the disciple, he sent the angel and he took the hand of our holy father Abba John and brought him to Shihet, by the might of God. He told him concerning his disciple and he told him also, saying: "The day draweth nigh wherein thou shalt have**

**rest from all thy labours and rightly take thy rest with all the saints."**

**Immediately the angel was hidden from him and the righteous man came to where the disciple was and said unto him: "Well done indeed, O my obedient son." And he touched his body and it was made whole, and immediately he arose, and did obeisance to him, and his father blessed him. And when all the brethren knew, they gathered unto him and received blessing from him, for they loved him greatly, for he was to them both an encourager and a teacher for the salvation of their souls. And he performed many severe exercises in secret.**

**And further, after these things, it pleased the king Christ to give him rest from all his labours and to translate him from out this world, full of suffering and dangers and wretchedness, and to bring him again to the heavenly Jerusalem and the resting-places of light and the mansions on high and the tabernacles above, in exchange for his exercises and his austerities, and to give him eternal life in the land of the living. And the Lord visited him with a little fever and as he lay he blessed the Lord. And all his children were gathered unto him and they said unto him: "Our father, speak a word unto us." And he said unto them: "Do not hold disputations regarding heresies, neither go in to a house with women, nor put your trust in rulers, nor get for yourselves substance; (but) let your handiwork suffice you."**

**And when he had said these things unto them, he lifted up his eyes and saw the companies that had come for him, clothed in glory, and a great company of angels and companies of the righteous that dwelt in the desert, after**

whose example he had striven. And being in the joy and the gladness of the Holy Spirit, he opened his mouth and yielded up his spirit into the hands of the Lord and his soul was taken up to heaven by the angels that had come for him. And he received of the Lord the prizes and the *eporion* and the high rewards and he received the inheritance of all the saints.

Forthwith his holy body was enshrouded with great honour whilst it dispersed sweet odours like unto spices; and they bore him, singing before him, until they brought him unto the east of the church of our holy father, the hegumen, Abba John. And they made for him a vault beneath the ground and laid him therein; and over it they built a notable monument and he was for a help unto everyone that should pray therein with faith. And the day wherein went to rest our holy and all-saintly father John was the 25th day of the month Khoiak. May (his) holy blessing be with us, Amen. And God poured out mercy upon his children and they began to increase and multiply and great blessing was on their ministration and great security and uprightness in their holy community, through the prayers of our holy father Abba John Khame, and the mercy of God shall not cease to be with them for ever.

[8 foll. missing.]

And he wrote it once more according as the Holy Spirit came upon him again. Now these things I have said concerning them that gainsay with unconvincing opinion, believing not these things which we tell of the life of our father Abba John Khame. But woe to such as these, for they shall perish in their gainsaying even as

**Korah; they shall be under the curse of Balaam. Isaiah the prophet telleth of their shame(?), saying: "Woe unto them that say of truth that it is falsehood, woe unto them that say of the light that it is darkness, woe unto them that say of that which is sweet that it is bitter," [Isa. 5:20]. Our Savior saith: "If one cause to stumble one of these little ones that believe on me, it were good for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his body and that he were drowned in the sea," [Matt. 18: 6, 7], and: "Woe to that man through whom the occasion of stumbling cometh."**

**Hear again, O thou that gainsayeth, that I may convince thy heart through the Holy Scriptures. For seeing that the lawless Jews hid the holy Cross and the tomb of Christ and spake falsehood concerning his resurrection, after 300 years Cyriacus revealed it by command of the King Constantine (and) heaven and earth were filled with its holy glory.**

**Now these things I relate, O my beloved, that ye may believe. For by the will of God we have written unto you a small portion from the Life of our blessed father. Seeing therefore that they that believe have power for all things, yet have not the unbelievers a single penny. [This phrase also occurs in Budge, Coptic Apoc., 83 and Bu. Mart. 52 apparently as a biblical quotation]. But wherefore say I these things and others also? Who can hinder the winds of heaven, or who can hide the rays of the sun, or who can hide the light of the moon? Neither can a city be hid that is set upon a hill, according to the saying of the Lord [Matt. 5:14]; and by this we believe that no adversary hath power to hide the Life of our holy father Abba John Khame, of whom God-clad men,**

worthy of trust, with one accord bare witness. And we too have proclaimed it, to the glory of the name of God, as a remembrance for ever of our holy father, a boast also to us, his children, knowing surely that there is nothing hid that shall not be known [Matt. 10:26]. For this cause we have begun to speak thus far.

Verily, O my beloved, we are gladdened today in the commemoration of our holy father, like them that are gladdened with wine. If there was joy for the people of the children of Israel when the ark returned unto them from out the land of the gentiles, then how great indeed is our joy in the finding of the Life of our holy father! If the ark struck the gentiles and Dagon their god, even so did the name of the Life of our father strike Satan and his wicked demons [1 Sam. 5:3]. If the Lord blessed the house of Aminadab by the bringing in of the ark unto his house [1 Sam. 7:1], even so shall the Lord bless everyone that shall write the book of the Life of our father and bring it in unto his house in faith, and him that shall hear it.

Seeing that we have said sufficient unto your benevolence, O my beloved, ye God-loving people, bearing witness unto you with faithful proofs, that by the will of God he [?] revealed unto us the Life of our God-clad father at this present time, that it might be for a comfort unto us. God hath not left it hidden under the bushel, but rather hath set it upon the golden candlestick and its rays of light have reached unto the uttermost ends of all the earth.

Hear further and I shall tell you of this other wonder whereof we are told, that was done after the death of our

holy father. It befell in the time of the great famine that was in the 682nd year of the Holy Martyrs [AD 966], that there was great affliction over all the land because of the hunger that prevailed. And some treacherous men gathered together and made a band, that they should break into the community of our holy father and despoil it. And having taken ladders, they set them up against the wall, that they might descend and slay the old men and despoil the sanctuary.

O, the great wonder that then befell! Suddenly there appeared great black [*khame*] serpents, fearful in their form, and rushed upon them, wishing to devour them. And immediately they were afraid and came down quickly from thence and betook them to many other places of the wall and they saw the serpents pursuing after them. Immediately they knew that it was a power of God that watched over them [ie. the monks] and they departed in fear. And when they arose in the morning they came to the monastery and told the brethren those things they had attempted to do and those that they had seen; and they established a peace with them for ever.

And the brethren, when they heard these things, gave thanks to God, who had saved them from this bitter death. This gift was theirs through the mediation of the holy Theotokos Mary, to the glory of the name of our holy father, because of the covenant that she had established with him, saying: "I will be with thy children and will save them for thy sake unto the end"; and this she fulfilled unto him in deed and in word of truth. And many among them bear witness unto us that she appeared unto them face to face and told them great mysteries, but especially our father Shenouti, he that was



**a successor to our blessed father and became ruler over the community.**

**Let us content ourselves thus far, lest the discourse increase greatly; for we have left out much on account of those without faith. Verily my whole time and the remainder of my years shall not suffice me, that I may tell a small portion of thy glory, O my lord father, nor can my mind nor my tongue tell of thy honour, O beloved of Christ, O thou well-famed of the Holy Spirit.**

**Thou wast the friend of God, even as Abraham; thou didst offer thy body as a sacrifice unto him, even as Isaac; thou wast wise as Joseph, the Lord gave thee a lot like unto Ephraim and Manasseh; thou didst behold the glory of God, even as Moses; thou didst make laws for thy people like unto him; the Lord entrusted thee with the priesthood, even as Aaron; thou didst pray for thy people like unto Phinehas; the word of the Lord came unto thee, even as Jeremiah the prophet; thou wast filled with the Holy Spirit, like unto the apostles; thou didst trample on all the power of the enemy, thou didst trample on all his desires, thou didst scatter all his counsels; thou didst bring low the violence of desire and all the wiles of his passions which take many forms and wherewith he hath deceived many, through fornication that contendeth with flesh.**

**But thou, O our father, thou didst make thy members a temple of the Holy Spirit, because of thy purity. For thou didst purify thy five senses and wast faithful with that which is thine. Thou didst take the five talents and traded with them and they made five talents and thy pound made ten pounds [Matt. 25.16].**

**Thou didst give them unto thy Lord with gladness and he honoured thee in the midst of thy fellows and granted thee ten exalted grades, filled with glory in heaven. Thou didst flourish as the palm-tree, thou didst wax broad as the cedars of Lebanon; thy perfume has spread abroad as a lily from the purity of thy virginity. Thou didst become a ruler to those of the desert and a captain of monks; thou didst become a fountain of righteousness and a law-giver of virtue. Thou wast a haven of salvation for many souls; thou becamest a sage and a teacher and a leader for many peoples; thou wast an Israelite in whom is no guile; thou didst become a sweet savour, acceptable before God and his angels.**

**Unto whom shall I liken thee, with what shall I honour thee, O our holy father? Verily, thou art like unto a golden bell; when it soundeth the people rejoice. Verily, thou wast a light shining forth greatly in heaven and upon the earth. Thou wast a sweet-smelling rose in the churches of the orthodox and the elect doctors tell of thy honour. Therefore I beseech you, O my lord father, receive of my hands my little gift, poor though it be; and do thou number me also with the widow, that cast in two mites into the treasury. For I am an unlearned and ignorant man and untried in speech; therefore have thou me in remembrance before our Lord Jesus Christ, that he may forgive me, even me the humblest one, both my many sins and all my errors of tongue. And I beseech you, O God-loving people, gathered together in this holy place today, blame me not that I attempted a great matter, too high for my capacity in that I should tell a small portion from the Life of our father, Abba John Khame.**

**And the measure is reached that we should bring the discourse to an end. May it be unto us all that we attain a little compassionate mercy, through the mediation of the Lady of us all, the holy Mary, and the mediation of the archangels Michael and Gabriel and Raphael and the entreaties of all the Saints that have pleased God and the holy prayers of our father that loveth his children; through the grace and the compassion and the lovingkindness of our Lord, Our God, and our Saviour, Jesus Christ, through whom all glory, all honour and all worship befitteth the Father, with him and with the Holy Spirit, life-giving and consubstantial with him, now and at all times and for all eternity. Amen.**

**Mercy to him that writeth. Amen.**

**Peace to him that readeth. Amen.**

**Understanding to him that heareth. Amen.**

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**The St. Pachomius Orthodox Library, Pascha 1997.**

**O Lord, remember Thy servants the translator Mary and the scribes Mary, Cyrus, John, Edward, James, Alifa, Mark, Lucian, Minister Faust, Arthur, Mark, David, Iain, Richard, Robert, Michael, Simrete Selassie, Nigel, David, George, George, Ken, the Subdeacon Herman, and Richard.**

**THE END, AND TO GOD BE THE GLORY!**

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