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## Monasticism in St Jerome's Letters and Lives of the Hermits \*

### SPREAD OF MONASTICISM

**B**UT in spite of such initial opposition monasticism spread like wildfire. In Egypt when Paula visited the monasteries in 386 the number of monks who dwelt there ran into several thousands (108.14). In Palestine soon after 386 Hilarion founded many monasteries (H. 14; H. 24), and when he went to visit them he was sometimes accompanied by as many as two thousand monks (H. 25). There were monks near Lychnos (H. 30) and Bruchium (H. 33); in Syria in the desert of Chalcis (M. 3; Epp. 2-16); in Pontus, Cappadocia, Armenia (58.3), India, Persia, Ethiopia (107.2), Mesopotamia (16.10), Cyprus (108.7), Dalmatia and in the Dalmatian islands (16.10); in the islands off the coast of Etruria (77.6); in North Italy, Rome, Spain and Gaul (Cf. *supra*).

In this picture of the spreading of monasticism Jerome is by no means exaggerating: his statements are confirmed not only by Christian writers but also by non-Christian ones like Libanios (Oratio, 2.32), Eunapes of Sardis (Life of the Sophists, ed. Boissonale p. 472), Rutilius Namatianus (Itiner. 439-452).

### REASONS FOR THE SPREADING OF MONASTICISM

Hughes gives five reasons for the spreading of monasticism: Jerome's advocacy up to a degree; the monastic spirit being widely diffused in all countries including the ancient brotherhood of the Bramans of India; its strong appeal to the Romans who still cherished the old simplicity and sternness as a reaction from the luxury and effeminacy of the day; the fact that the moral corruption of society was bound to drive the best men in sheer disgust to the opposite extreme; the reaction from the inward corruption of the Church due to loss of fervour after the cessation of martyrdoms and persecutions.

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(\*) The first part of this article appeared in Vol. IV, No. 1, pp. 1-13.

These reasons we accept, but especially with reference to the quick development of the movement in Rome, we add a few others which Jerome's works under consideration suggest :

1) The proneness of the Roman genius to accept novel and foreign theories in matters of a social and philosophical character and the Latin mythological system is nothing else than an admirable coordination and in many ways identification of indigenous and Greek religious beliefs. This developed into such proportions that in the late imperial times such foreign cults as Eastern Mithraism became a second religion with many in Rome. Monasticism with its appeal to spiritual perfection and manliness in self-sacrifice was for the cultured Christians of Rome a novel and, indeed, a brilliantly coloured presentation of the ideal moral standard to which Christianity aspired (14.10; 22.41).

2) The Christian aristocrats in Rome and in the West found in monasticism a vast field for their dormant qualities of leadership and for their thirst for social distinction, as well as a refuge for their forced idleness, excluded as they were from any effective leadership in political life. In 123.13, writing to the noble Geruchia, Jerome positively dwells on the influence and prestige which her relatives had assumed by their monastic leadership in their province : "avia tua, mater et amita, nonne auctoritatis pristinae honorisque maioris sunt, dum eas tota provincia et ecclesiarum principes suscipiunt?". So also in 130.6, writing to Demetrius : "gratulari quod nobilem familiam virgo virginitate sua nobiliorem faceret".

3) Monasticism, especially in its comfortable "home" form soon became a fashion : the social distinction which it assumed greatly emphasised that. We do not hint that this was the case of all—that could hardly explain the immense sacrifice of Paula—but that it greatly helped in the spreading of the movement (cf. *infra*; 127.8; 130.6).

4) As regards the lower classes among whom slavery and clientship were still two of the fundamental aspects of the structure of society, monasticism in its community form in many ways offered great advantages for a betterment of their social standing and treatment. In 22.9 Jerome clearly suggests the fact that some slave-girls joined their mistress in her monastic pursuits mainly from motives of a betterment in their material conditions of life. Some ladies might even go so far as to redeem from

slavery maidens who would be prepared to join their nunnery (54.14).

5) The indifferent moral standard of some of the clergy suggested that a higher pursuit of spiritual perfection was needed in the ministers of the Church (Ep. 52). After its triumph under Constantine the Church spread much too rapidly, especially among the wealthy classes. It had hardly any time to make the new converts, many of whom no doubt conformed from purely worldly motives, assimilate the purity of life which is essentially its purpose and aim, and the paganly-minded behaviour of many of the new converts not only was not dropped but acted as a cancer-cell which insensibly but surely began to spread inward corruption among Christians in every walk of life, even among the clergy (Epp. 52 and 147). To such a state of affairs, monasticism, whatever its aberrations, appeared as a panacea in its genuine motives of asceticism, and many bishops were not slow to see in it a means for the needed reform. Hence even in Jerome's time we see bishops like Augustine (134.2), Ambrose and Eusebius of Vercellae organising their clergy on a monastic basis and themselves leading a monastic life. In the following centuries the movement became still more common, especially when the Popes in Rome adopted it for those of their clergy who were attached to the principal churches, like the Basilicas of the Lateran, the Vatican and Santa Maria Maggiore (cf. Schuster, in *Miscellanea Ger.* p. 119; Duchesne p. 452). At this stage monasticism drops its aberrations of extreme asceticism and becomes essentially a means of reformation and control of the clergy. Jerome pictures this period preparatory to such a development: several of the monks he mentions are also priests, e.g. Heliodorus, Pammachius, Oceanus, Domnic, Exuperius bishop of Tolosa, John bishop of Jerusalem, Epiphanius bishop of Salamis.

6) Monasticism in its glamour of holiness and heroic renunciation takes the place of martyrdom in Christian society. Jerome makes that clear in 108.31, where writing of Paula's virtues he says: "*mater tua longo martvrio coronata est. non solum effusio sanguinis in confessione reputatur, sed devotione quoque mentis servitus cotidianum martvrium est*".

7) Hughes rightly notes that the normal corruption of Roman society was bound to drive the best men in sheer disgust to the opposite extreme. This is to be stressed as regards the sexual

riot that had always been characteristic of Roman life. Caesar who had little time for love romance had had five successive wives. Cicero, the prototype of Roman gravitas, scandalised the whole of Rome by marrying his young ward when, in his old age, he divorced Terentia. Seneca to describe the humdrum of daily life writes of the average Roman gentleman as passing his day through lust and banquets. Nor were things any better in Jerome's time. Slave-girls were commonly kept by Roman gentlemen for their lust (69.5), seemingly with little protest from their wives; the law connived at the unchastity of husbands by not punishing them for sexual misbehaviour; indeed it legalised concubinage by recognising it as a form of marriage if prolonged uninterruptedly to twelve months; the outspoken way in which Jerome writes to Eustochium when only a girl of seventeen (Ep. 22) suggests a sexual precociousness in Roman society; Fabiola's divorce and consequent adultery and concubinage had seemingly brought little disgrace upon her (Ep. 77), and, indeed, the presbyter Amandus is not sure whether he ought to deny the sacraments to another woman who had acted in similar fashion (55. 4); Jerome, Augustine and Paulinus of Nola themselves had been unchaste in their youth. Hence the Christian reaction in favour of virginity which was the very basis of monastic asceticism.

#### MONASTICISM AS A SOCIAL DISTINCTION

As we have seen, even in Rome prejudice against monasticism was gradually overcome. Indeed, mainly through the influence of the many aristocratic ladies who professed it, the monastic vocation became a veritable public honour (127.8) and assumed the role of a social qualification. When Demetrias professed herself a nun her mother and grandmother threw themselves on her neck and wept for joy (130.6, written in 414). Hence the custom of parents to dedicate their children from their infancy to a monastic vocation. Asella had been so dedicated (24.2). Laeta dedicated her child Paulina (107.6) and Gaudentius his infant daughter (Ep. 128). The custom must have been very common as it soon degenerated into considerations of expediency inasmuch as worldly-minded mothers began to dedicate to virginity only deformed and crippled daughters for whom they could find no suitable husband (130.6). Moreover they often took occasion from such a dedication to bestow the bulk of their fortune upon their sons and daughters living in the world, giving their

virgin daughters a miserable dowry which was scarcely sufficient for their maintenance (130.6).

#### THE TAKING OF THE VEIL

The glamour with which the monastic vocation was surrounded can be seen from the public ceremony which was held at the taking of the veil. The professed virgin was considered as the bride of Christ and that ceremony was meant to symbolise her mystical marriage with Christ. Hence the ceremony took place only in the case of women, and, later, imperial legislation punished as a sacrilegious "adulteress" the maiden who broke her vow of virginity (Cod. Theod. 9.25); the ceremony took place in some conspicuous church, such as St Peter's in Rome (147.6). In Jerome's time it was already held on some festival: St. Ambrose mentions Christmas day (De Virg. 3.1) and Easter Sunday (Ad Virg. Laps. 19); later, in Rome, it was held only on the solemn festivals of Christmas Day, the Epiphany, Easter Monday and St Peter's Day (cf. Decretal of Gelasius, ed. Jaffé, 636). The bishop officiated. With words of prayer, says Jerome, he recited the solemn sentence of St. Paul (II Cor. 9.2): "I wish to present all as a chaste virgin to Christ", and put the bridal veil on the head of the virgin who stood beside him arrayed like a queen with her clothing of wrought gold and her raiment of needlework (130.2). This did Demetrias make her public profession as a nun (130.2); thus the nun whom Sabinianus had planned to abduct (147.6). In the case of virgins dedicated from their infancy the ceremony was held quite early: thus Asella was only 10 years old when she was made to take the veil (24.2). In later centuries, no doubt because of lack of vocation in many who were professed so early, the ceremony was hardly ever held before the virgin was twenty-five; in some cases the age of forty was required (Duchesne p. 423).

No ancient ritual of the taking of the veil according to the Roman rite is extant: we have only the prayers used in the Sacramentaries given by Muratori in "Liturgia Romana Vetus", vol. 1 p. 444; ib. p. 629; vol. 2 p. 184; ib. p. 674. The absence in any one of them of any reference to the passage of II Cor. 11.2 of St. Paul: *Despondi enim vos uni viro virginem castam exhibere Christo*", which Jerome quotes as recited by the Pope at the taking of the veil by Demetrias in Rome (Jerome's exact words are: "*volo autem vos omnes virginem castam exhibere*

Christo'') indicate that at the end of the fourth century and the beginning of the fifth the prayers used in Rome were somewhat different from those contained in Muratori's sacramentaries.

### MONASTICISM A PERFECT FORM OF HOLINESS

Monasticism soon became synonymous with the fullest expression of Christian perfection. For Jerome it is an earthly paradise: "monachorum invisere choros et caelestem in terris circuire familiam" (3.1). It is a life even higher in its spiritual pursuit than that which the clergy lead, for the monk's ultimate aim is to be perfect (14.6), and the attainment of such perfection surpasses in its heroic effort anything that the old Greek and Roman mythology have recorded in their heroic tales: "cedant huic veritati tam Graeco quam Romano stilo mendaciis ficta miracula" (3.4). Indeed, writes Jerome to Nepotian, it is an ideal for which it is worth while to leave your father and aged mother, your loving sister and foster-brother, your little nephews hanging on your neck to keep you home (14.2).

The condition for monastic life was the retirement from the world, and those who did not go to the desert or join a community were expected to lead a retired life. That is always one of the main precepts Jerome gives to his monastic correspondents. If they are ladies of society like Furia and Geruchia he warns them not to join in the more noisy functions of social life, such as visits and entertainments; he repeatedly admonishes Eustochium and Demetrius to cherish the solitude of their chamber; he dissuades Paulinus from coming to Jerusalem as that city was too crowded for a monk; he advised Rusticus to leave his mother's house if it appeared too noisy with its large attendance of slaves and clients. To all he commends the solitude of the country (125.8; 14.10; 43.3).

But the forsaking of the world is only a beginning. The essence of the monastic life is the continuous union with God by means of prayer. Jerome's picture of Blesilla may be taken as a type. It is only when her neck aches and her knees totter and her eyes begin to close with weariness that she gives them reluctantly to rest from her night prayers (38.4). Paula passes night and day in unbroken prayer (108.15). Prayer in common and in private is the principal occupation of the monks at Nitria (Ep. 22). When in the evening they retire to their cell they keep vigil

in prayer, and the Fathers go round the cells one by one, and, putting their ears to the door, they make sure that the monks are praying, and, says Jerome, if they find a monk slothful, they visit him more frequently and exhort him to pray more (22.35).

The intimate relation between prayer and asceticism is indeed the reason which Jerome often brings for his preference of virginity to the married state. For Jerome, married life is a great obstacle to continuous prayer. He stresses that point in Epp. 49 and 22.22. But his most plausible passage for that contention is in Adv. Helv. 19. He asks Helvidius: "Do you think there is no difference between one who spends her time in prayer and fasting (the virgin) and one who must, at the approach of her husband, make up her countenance, walk with mincing gait and feign show of endearment?... Then come the prattling of infants, the noisy household, children watching for her word and waiting for her kiss, the reckoning up of expenses, the preparation to meet the outlay. On one side you will see a company of cooks, girded for the onslaught, and attacking the meat; there you hear the hum of a multitude of weavers. Meanwhile a message is delivered that the husband and his friends have arrived. The wife, like a swallow, flies all over the house. She has to see to everything. Is the sofa smooth? Is the pavement swept? Are all flowers in the cups? Is the dinner ready? Tell me, pray, where amid all this is the thought of God... The very management of the household, the education of the children, the wants of the husband, the correction of the servants cannot fail to call the mind away from God".

Next to prayer, the ascetic sought to attain perfection by means of austerities. In the first place these were meant as an atonement for past sins. So Jerome in 15.2 writes to Damasus: "pro facinoribus meis ad solitudinem con migravi". In 108.15 he writes to Paula saying: "turpanda est facies quam contra Dei praeceptum purpuris et cerussa et stibio saepe depinxi; affligendum corpus quod multis vacavit deliciis; longus risus perpeti compensandus est fletu" etc. Besides, austerities were sought as a means of achieving through self-imposed suffering the glory of heroism which before was won by martyrdom. Hence the monastic strove to reach an ever increasing degree of perfection by means of prolonged abstinence from food and sleep, by silence and solitude, self-denials of the most elementary comforts of life,

and physical fatigue (45.3). Jerome's picture of Paula may be taken as a type. Even in the severest fever she refuses to rest on an ordinary bed but lies on the hard ground covered only with a mat of goat's hair (108.15).

Fasting is one of the principal features of a monk's austerities. Blesilla's fasts make her steps totter with weakness and her face look pale and quivering (39.1). Fasting is the main austerity of Hilarion (H. 11). But Jerome's own experience seems to have made him modify considerably his views on that point. While in the earlier letters he stresses the necessity of frequent fasting, in the later ones he considerably softens down his injunctions and often warns against too severe abstinence from food inasmuch as that may break down weak constitutions and cause bodily sickness rather than lay the foundations of a holy life (127.4; 130.11). In 107.10, warning Laeta on this point he confesses that he has learnt by experience that "an ass toiling along the highroad makes for an inn when it is weary": abstinence often turns to gluttony. Fasting was in Jerome's time officially imposed by the Church only in Lent and was continued for forty days (41.3), but the faithful were free to fast, besides, at any other time except on feast days between Easter Sunday and Whit Sunday (41.3). Fasting included, besides other things, abstinence from flesh meat and oil (128.2).

Voluntary surrender of possessions is another point on which Jerome lays great stress. He continually warns against riches and makes much in the panegyrics of the charities which his heroes devoted all their wealth to. Paul's self-imposed poverty is contrasted to the wealth of the rich (P. 17). The story of the monk of Nitria who left a sum of money at his death (22.33) is sure indication of the incompatibility, in Jerome's view of worldly riches with monastic life, and Paula made it a rule in her monastery that none of her nuns should be allowed to have any possessions (108.20).

Voluntary poverty was to show itself in the very way in which monks lived. Their habitations were only big enough to give them shelter. Indeed, many monks lived in small huts, and in the case of monasteries all forms of gaudiness and decoration were completely banned.

As model monastics Jerome mentions Paul, Antony, Hilarion, the Macarii, Pambo, Isidore (22.33), Pachomius (127.5),



Hesychius (*Vita Hil.*), besides those already mentioned earlier in this Chapter.

Jerome's enthusiasm in presenting monasticism as a perfect form of holiness has been often misunderstood. Such is the case of Dill, Glover, Freemantle and Hughes, the last of whom writes: "To view, however, asceticism, and extreme asceticism, as Jerome did, as an end in itself, as a rule for all and sundry, was to set up an impossible standard" (p. 53).

Such a view of Jerome fails to take into consideration the rhetorical methods according to which he shaped his diction. In the rhetorical schools one-sidedness of view, exaggeration to the point of contradiction, was not only allowed but even commended for stressing a point. Quintilian is all for such a method in 9.2.3. Considering his letters as a whole and especially his enthusiasm for bishops, for the clergy and for the social works of charity, one will have to conclude that Jerome did not think of personal holiness in terms of aloofness from social intercourse. He may have held that opinion in the earlier part of his life, but later he considerably changed that view. Indeed, the extreme form of solitary monasticism for which he shows so much enthusiasm in Ep. 14, he later positively disavows (125.9-12). In the same Ep. 14.8, he clearly puts the clergy in a higher position than monks: "clerici oves pascunt, ego pascor; illi de altario vivunt, mihi quasi infructuosae arbori securis ponitur ad radices si munus ad altare non defero... mihi ante presbyterum sedere non licet" (cf. 54.5.4). In that context he makes it clear that what he writes when he stressed his contention bears no reference to other walks of life: "alia... monachi causa est, alia clericorum". The same thing he writes to Paulinus stressing that he does not expect the austerities he sets out for monks to be observed by people in other walks of life: "quod loquor non de episcopis, non de presbyteris, non de clericis loquor, quorum aliud est officium, sed de monacho" (58.4.3.).

For Jerome monasticism is a perfect form of life, but not the only one.

#### KINDS OF MONASTICISM

From Jerome's letters we gather that in his time there were four principal kinds of monasticism. Of three of them he formally gives an account in 22.34-36, as being the types of monastic

life in Egypt; the fourth, which might be called "home monasticism" he does not mention by name but continually refers to and speaks about in many of his letters. Hughes deals with the first three only and summarises the passage just referred to of Ep. 22.

**(a) The Solitaries**

The solitaries were known as anchorites, as they lived in the desert, each man by himself and withdrawn from human society (22.34). This kind of monasticism was according to Jerome founded by Paul and made famous by Anthony (P. 1; 22.36). That statement about Paul we have already qualified (cf. supra).

The solitaries retired far into the desert and lived practically by themselves under no fixed rule except the general principle of prayer and austerities. Jerome himself had been an anchorite in Syria in 374-379 and the vivid description he gives of his way of life in 22.7 is worth summarising: "He lived alone exposed to the burning sun during the day in the savage dwelling place of the vast solitude. Rough sackcloth covered his parched limbs, and his skin from long neglect had become as black as an Ethiopian's. He meditated every day with tears and groans on his past sins, and if drowsiness chanced to overcome his struggles against it, his bare bones, which hardly held together, clashed against the ground. His food, even in sickness, was cold water, and, he adds in 22.36, bread and salt. His face was pale and his body chilled with fasting. He often passed whole nights in prayer and ceased not till morning in beating his breast. Wherever he saw hollow valleys, craggy mountains, steep cliffs, there he made his oratory and there the house of correction for his unhappy flesh".

For such a life a wild place was indispensable. Such was the island which Bonosus chose for himself (3.4); such Antony's inaccessible haunt (H. 31).

In such a life in the desert it was frequently impossible to keep in touch with events elsewhere. The few and short letters written in 374-379 in the Chalcidian wilderness are a clear indication to that. During those years Jerome has very little news from home (Ep. 6), and in Ep. 15 to Pope Damasus he stresses the difficulty of communicating with him. The hermits had a vow

not to leave the desert to which they had retired. So Jerome is detained by his vow from going to Jerusalem (5.1). Indeed this monastic vow was universal except in the rule of St Basil (Butl. p. 528). But nothing impedes the hermits from being visited by others, as Jerome is visited by Evagrius (7.1). For all that, such visits are necessarily limited, and in 5.2 Jerome sadly owns that he cannot hope to see his friend Rufinus although the latter was visiting Egypt and Palestine.

The solitaries dressed themselves in rough haircloth and, sometimes, a cloak of skin (H. 4). They kept their hair uncut, and, if at all, shaved rarely: Hilarion shaved once a year! (H. 9). Sometimes they practised austerities of a highly artificial character such as the carrying of chains fastened to their bodies in token of sorrow (17.2). Their food was just enough to keep them alive: half a loaf of coarse bread (P. 10), and sometimes taken with salt (H. 11; 22. 36), a few figs or vegetables (H. 10), and water from streams (P. 6; H. 4) are mentioned in conjunction with Paul and Hilarion. They sometimes fed themselves on wild herbs and raw root vegetables, and when weakened through continuous fasting they might allow themselves the luxury of a little oil or a little broth made of meal and pounded herbs. Whatever their dinner which was generally of about six ounces all told they had it at sunset (H. 4; ib. 11).

They lived wherever they could find a little shelter: in caves (P. 3; 17.2), cold and damp cells (19.17), or in small roughly-built huts of reeds and sedge (H. 9). Hilarion could hardly stand in his little hut (H. 9). In P. 6 Jerome mentions the case of a monk who lived in a dry cistern, and Butler writes of female hermits in Egypt living in tombs (p. 530). They generally slept on the bare floor on a bed of rushes (H. 10).

The severity of such a life can hardly be overestimated. No wonder that Heliodorus (14.1) and Niceas (Ep. 8), both of whom had followed Jerome to the desert were terrified at its hardships and left him.

In 22.36 Jerome, not being concerned with details, does not distinguish between the different kinds of solitaries commonly found in the East; but in other places he gives indications of some of them, if only in an indirect way. He mentions the "recluses" who remained for a long time in an abandoned and uncomfortable and dismal place, like an empty well, living on such

food as people might bring them : such are the two monks of whom Jerome writes in P. 6; the "anchorites" who went deep into the desert and lived all alone as Paul, Bonosus (3.4) Hilarion in the first period of his monastic life and in his last years; the "graziers" who lived on wild herbs which they picked up from the meadows : so was Hilarion between his twentieth and twentyseventh year (H. 11); "hermits", who, although living alone, had their habitation not far from that of other monks with whom they gathered for common prayers once or twice a week : this seems to have been Jerome's own life in the desert of Chalcis in Syria. In this last type the many hermits formed a sort of grouping under the leadership of one among them whom they styled "Pater" (17.3), and permission was to be obtained from him for any new hermit to settle in the same district. This was the case of the hermits in the desert of Chalcis. Theodosius was the superior of Jerome's group in 374 (Ep. 2), and Marcus later, in 378-379 (Ep. 17).

Although the principal occupation of the solitaries was prayer and contemplation, they often applied themselves to some kind of sedentary work which could be carried on in their cell, like basket-making and linen-weaving (125.11 ; 22.33).

The solitaries were very numerous in the East, in Syria, Palestine and Egypt. They were also found in the islands of the Adriatic and of the Dalmatian coasts.

Jerome in his early life favoured the heremital form of monasticism (14.10), but his experience in the Syrian desert made him change his mind (Epp. 15 ; 16 ; 17 ; 22.7 ; 125.12), and when later he settled in Palestine, at Bethlehem, he adopted the coenobitic system. Indeed, in 22.7 and ib. 30, he gives us to understand that the solitary life is scarcely a proof against the after-effects of past worldliness. And in 125.9 and 130.7, in discussing the comparative merits of solitary and community monasticism he clearly gives preference to the latter. His own experience was that "when men withdrew from the society of their fellows they became exposed to unclean and godless imaginations, and in the fulness of their arrogance and disdain developed an attitude of looking down upon everyone but themselves and might arm their tongue to despise the clergy and their fellow hermits" (130.17). Lacking guidance they "often impair their health by excessive fasting and the dampness of their cells, or turn melancholy from

the weariness of their solitude" (125.16). In this preference for community monasticism Jerome is in agreement with other eminent writers on monasticism (1).

**(b) The 'Remnuoth' Type**

The class is made up of those who live together in small groups". The word "remnuoth" (22.34) is not easy to understand, especially as it is difficult to determine the exact word written by Jerome, the manuscripts presenting considerable differences. The form chosen by Hilberg and accepted by De Labriolle (p. 328) seems to be very near to the original and may be connected with the Syriac verb ReMO = proiecit, and a plausible explanation of the word may perhaps be "scattered about": monks living in small groups of twos or threes, rarely in larger numbers, scattered about without any common union.

They were bound by no rule and each one followed his own fancy in the pursuit of monastic asceticism. They generally lived in cities, and in some places, as probably in the cities of Syria (22.34) theirs was the only type of monasticism. A part of their earnings they contributed to a common fund out of which food was provided for all. Although they sometimes competed with each other in fasting, they often developed a personal pride in all their behaviour. Being insufferent of any subordination they often quarrelled among themselves; what they made they sold for a very high price; they sneered at the clergy, and generally lived a worldly life. So Jerome notes that they studied effect in all their ways, keeping their sleeves loose, their boots bulging, their garb of the coarsest, and went about sighing, while on a holiday they made themselves sick with food (22.34) (2). Jerome, indeed, has only words of scorn for them. In Rome, indeed, and in the West such a form of monasticism sometimes degenerated into a living together which was a little better than concubinage. Under the cloak of spiritual fellowship widows and maidens professing virginity often lived with young freedmen, or even with the unmarried clergy, pretending to lead a monastic life (125.6; 128.4). In Ep. 117 Jerome gives a detailed picture of such a couple, though he uses somewhat restrained and guarded lan-

(1) PALLADIUS, *Hist. Lausiaca*, 18; FLICHE et MARTIN, p. 340.

(2) Cf. CASSIAN, *Collat.* 18.7.

guage. But in 22.14 he openly calls them "pestis agapetarum", unwedded wives, novel concubines and harlots, and denounces their real aim as directed to indulge in sexual intercourse. Indeed, when couples of monastics of different sexes lived together they easily became identified with the "agapetae" of earlier times whose scandals had called forth many protests particularly in the Council of Ancyra (314 A.D.), in which virgins consecrated to God were forbidden to live with men as sisters.

The name of "Remnuoth" was only used in Egypt and, perhaps, among the Semitic peoples of Palestine and Syria.

*(To be concluded)*

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