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Monachesimo e istituzioni ecclesiastiche in Egitto. Alcuni casi di interazione e integrazione. By Mariachiara Giorda. [Fondazione Bruno Kessler: Scienze religiose. Nuova serie 22.] (Bologna: E[dizioni] D[e]honiane] B[ologna]. 2010. Pp. 179. €12,60 paperback. ISBN 978-8-810-41516-0.)

The present publication represents the first part of a doctoral dissertation submitted to the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris in 2007. The study focuses on the relationship between monks and the ecclesiastical world—bishops, priests, and deacons—and the reasons and occasions for their exchanges and conflicts. A notable feature of the work is the use made of the documentary as well as the literary sources in both Greek and Coptic, including narratives, historical accounts, canonical sources, and synaxaries.

Mariachiara Giorda has chosen to study the period from the Council of Chalcedon until the arrival of the Arabs and Islam in Egypt. She notes that, whatever may have been the situation earlier in the relationship of monasticism with the institutional ecclesiastical authority, it is not correct to apply to this period a reading of monasticism founded on charismatic authority and antagonistic to institutional authority. Likewise it is mistaken to interpret the relationship between monasticism and the ecclesiastical institution in this period in terms of separation, conflict, and competition. On the contrary, she finds a constantly deepening integration of monasticism with the ecclesiastical institutions and an intensification of collaboration that leads to the construction of a specifically Egyptian Christian identity. Three themes have a privileged role in this research: the celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy among the monks and in the monasteries; the presence and role of a monastic clergy; and the relationship between the monks and the bishops, including the figure and model of the monk-bishop.

The book is divided into six chapters. The first examines the pluralism in Egyptian monasticism and the relations among monks, ecclesiastical institutions, and the laity as well as the state of research regarding the celebration of the liturgy, the monastic clergy, and monk-bishops. The second examines the celebrations in the monastic churches and the participation of the monks in the liturgy. The third studies the presence of a monastic clergy, its liturgical

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function, and other functions that distinguished the clerical monks from the lay monks. In the fourth chapter the specifically monastic roles of spiritual father, business manager, and so forth are examined. The fifth examines the relations between monks and bishops and presents some monk-bishop figures. The final chapter studies the relations of monks and institutions as can be seen from the biography of Shenoute and from a monastic Melitian archive.

Athanasius set in motion a complex process of integration between the monastic movement and the rest of the Church, which resulted in new and changed roles in the Church. With the ever-increasing diffusion of monasticism throughout Egypt, the monks assumed a role in the Church alongside the clergy and the laity. Many were consulted as spiritual guides. The monasteries became the place of encounter par excellence of the Christian life, the sacred place of encounter among monks, laity, clerics, and God (pp. 143-45).

From the point of view of methodology and of content the present work represents an important advance and synthesis in the study of monasticism in the period from 451 to 642 AD.

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