

TH 6300
Joel Stephen Williams
Day 2



How to do Church History

Remember it is CHURCH history:

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin said, “Everything is the sum of the past and that nothing is comprehensive except through its history” (in Ellis).

Jesuit scientist told de Chardin in 1935: “There is only one real road (as we learn from historical research); it is to build the future. It’s perfectly simple, but there are still so many people who behave as though the past were interesting in itself, and treat it as only the future deserves to be treated.”

Deut. 32:7 – “Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father and he will show thee: thy elders, and they will tell thee.”

Providence in Church History?

Young - “No longer does the historian assume that the hand of God has specially guided his own denomination, whether embattled or triumphant; in fact, God’s hand has become a fainter and fainter presence over the past 150 years of ecclesiastical history-writing. If the historian discerns God’s hand, he had better do so quietly. Instead, questions of providence, authentic development, and orthodoxy have been bracketed, for the most part, or ceded to denominational polemicists.”

Ranke - “But providence wanted something quite unexpected to arise from this controversy [between Spain and Portugal over the division of the New World] and what actually happened went far beyond what anyone could have foreseen” (in Outler).

Lord Macaulay, reviewing von Ranke’s *History of the Popes* in 1840 when he wrote, “No other institution is left standing which carries the mind back to the times when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon and when camelopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian amphitheatre . . .” (in Ellis).

Providence in Church History?

Outler - “It is rare enough nowadays to find historians who profess the Christian faith with critical understanding, rarer still to find those who dare to let their faith interpret their narrations.”

Outler - “It is a very tricky business to prevent our disbelief from generating negative value judgments on those who profess beliefs we have ourselves rejected. On the other side, the devout believer may also tell the same story plausibly—but not if his commitments turn his narrative into a partisan ‘success story.’”

Placing a limit on providence in church history:

Florovsky - “The purpose of a historical understanding is not so much to detect the divine action in history as to understand the human action—that is, human activities—in the bewildering variety and confusion in which they appear to a human observer” (in Outler).

“Trail of Blood” - Landmark Baptists

“pure, meaningless fact” <----- [middle] -----> “meaningful providence”

Troeltsch - avoiding irrelevance - commonalities

Purpose of Church History

Helps us to identify with others:

E. Glenn Hinson's article

Learn what to value and what not to overemphasize:

Helps us know how we got to where we are:

Problem of a history-less people.

Everett Ferguson's method of historical foreground.

Jean Le Clerc wrote, *sarcastically*, "An ecclesiastical historian ought to adhere inviolably to this maxim, that whatever can be favorable to heretics is false, and whatever can be said against them is true; while, on the other hand, all that does honor to the orthodox is unquestionable, and everything that can do them discredit is surely a lie. He must suppress, too, with care, or at least extenuate as far as possible, the errors and vices of those whom the orthodox are accustomed to respect, . . . and must exaggerate, on the contrary, the mistakes and faults of the heterodox, to the utmost of his power. He must remember that any orthodox writer is a competent witness against a heretic and is to be trusted implicitly on his word; while a heretic is never to be believed against the orthodox" (*Parrhasiana*, 1700).

Archbishop Hallinan – 1965 - "The higher man rides on the shoulders of the past, the more likelihood that his perspective of the present will be clear" (in Patterson).

Purpose of Church History

Gives us an understanding of those with whom we differ:

John Milton said the study of history tends “to inbreed within us that generous and Christianly reverence one of another which is the very nurse and guardian of Christian charity” (in Patterson).

William Stubbs, “We learn to see . . . the man whom we like the best often in the wrong, and repulsive men often in the right; we learn to recognize that the cause which we love best has suffered from the awkwardness of its defenders so great disparagement as in strict equity to justify the men who were assaulting it” (in Patterson).

Helps us to understand ourselves:

Purpose of Church History

Hopefully gives us insight:

Mosheim, said it “will be sufficient to fortify its true and zealous professors against all the threats, cavils, and stratagems of profane and impious men. . . And, among the many advantages that arise from the study of ecclesiastical history, it is none of the least, that we shall see therein the origin and occasions of those ridiculous rites, absurd opinions, foolish superstitions, and pernicious errors, with which Christianity is yet disfigured in too many parts of the world. This knowledge will naturally lead us to a view of the truth in its beautiful simplicity, will engage us to prove it, and render us zealous in its defense” (in Patterson).

Edward Burton

Bernard of Chartres, said all of us are “like dwarfs seated on the shoulders of giants; we see more things than the ancients and things more distant, but this is due neither to the sharpness of our own sight, nor to the greatness of our own minds, but because we are raised and borne aloft on that giant mass [of history]” (in Patterson).

Purpose of Church History

Introduces us to great thinkers, etc.:

Can give us courage and hope:

Adolf von Harnack told the Marburg faculty, “I am firmly convinced that the way in which church history is pursued will determine the future of the nature of our church.”

Usefulness in a seminary:

Walter Rauschenbusch - “As for church history, that is one of the disciplinary crosses which the inscrutable counsel of boards and faculties imposes on those who mean to be ‘scholarly preachers.’ It is with a start of genuine surprise that students wake up to find that history is actually interesting and may possibly play a really important part in their theological training” (in Patterson).

John T. McNeill - “Can it be possible that ministers neglect church history not so much because they despise the subject as because they shrink from the labor it involves” (in Patterson).

Ignatius - Theophoros - borne of God or God-bearer

“Who are you, poor devil?” asked Trajan.”

“No one calls a God-bearer a poor devil, unless you mean, thereby, that having Christ, a heavenly king, I confound the devils of the Demon,” answered Ignatius.”

“And who is a God-bearer?” asked Trajan.

“He that has Christ in his breast,” answered Ignatius.

“Do you not think that we too have gods in our heart?”

“You are deceived when you call the devils of the nations gods. There is only one God, and Christ Jesus his Son,” Ignatius said.

“Do you mean him who was crucified under Pontius Pilate?” asked the Emperor.

“I speak of him that nailed on the cross sin and its author, and sentenced every malice of the devil to be trodden down of them who carry him in their heart,” he answered.

Ignatius

“Do you then carry Christ within yourself?”

“Yes,” replied the martyr,” for it is written, ‘I will dwell in them and walk in them.’”

Then Trajan gave sentence: “Let Ignatius, who says he carries the Crucified in himself, be bound, taken to Rome, and thrown to the wild beasts to amuse the people.”

Birth of Ignatius

Church office - Antioch - Evodius

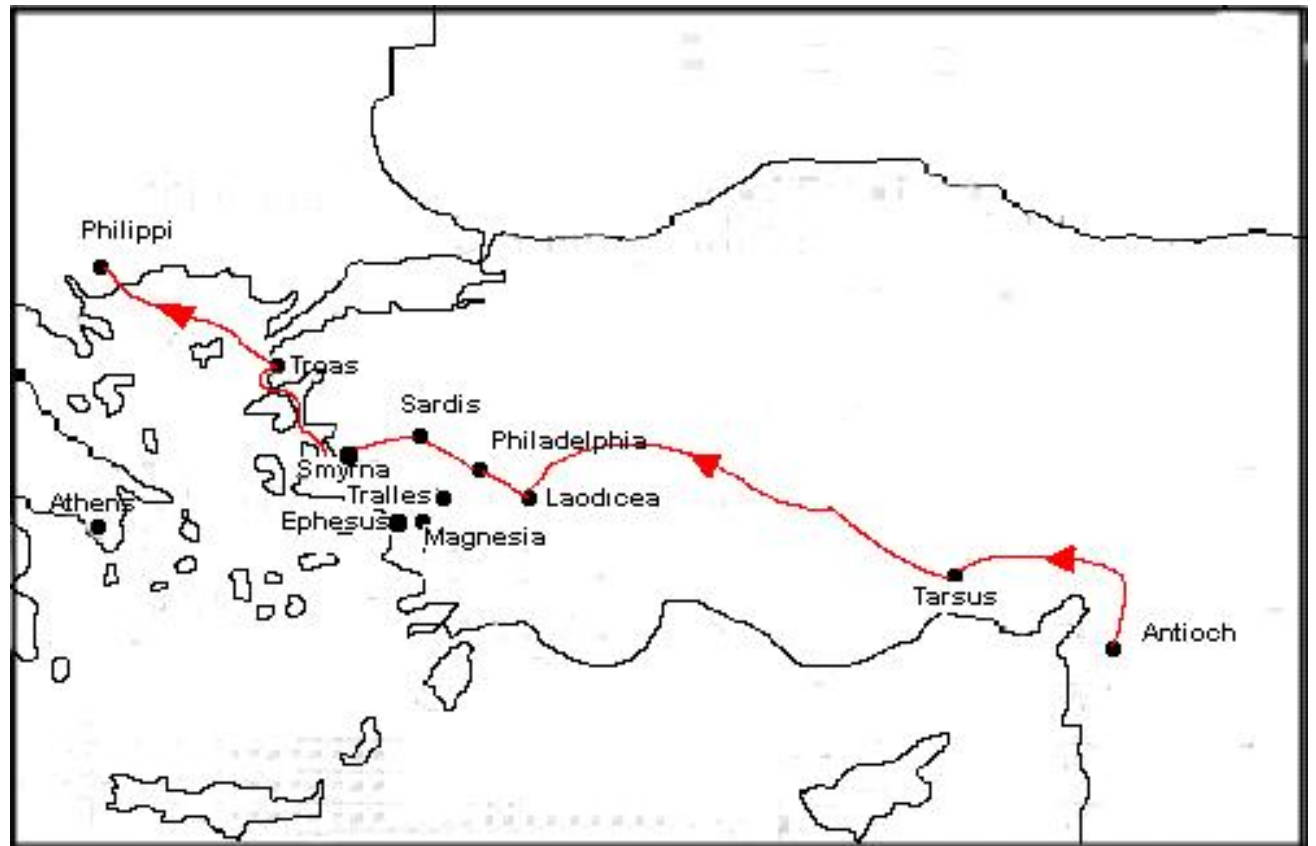
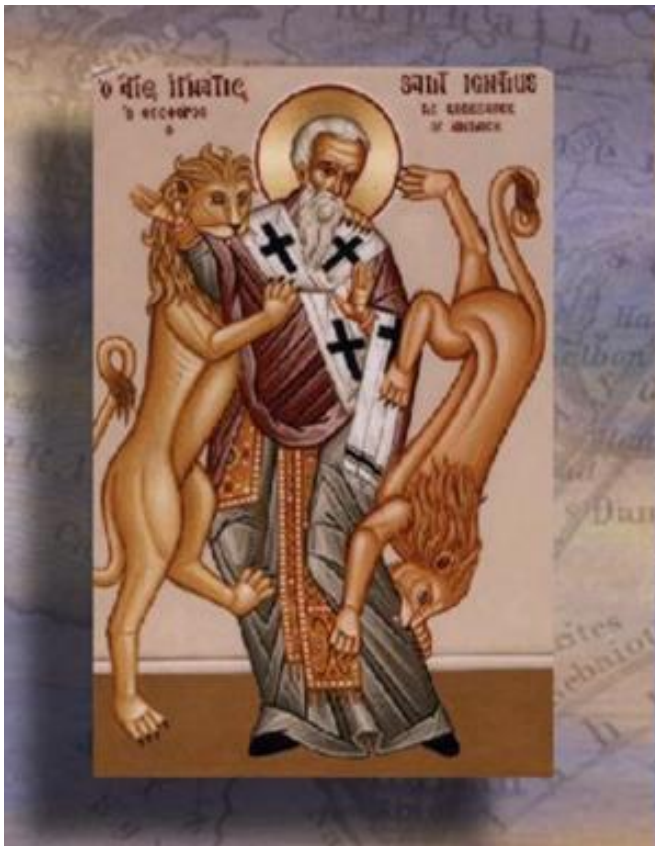
- Socrates - Ambrose - Pliny

Martyrdom



Ignatius

Possible route to martyrdom: Based on Staniforth & Louth, *Early Christian Writings*, p54



Ignatius

Route to martyrdom

Philadelphia - “accomplishes more through silence than others do by talking” (Phil. 1.1)

Smyrna

Letter to the Ephesians

Letter to the Magnesians

Letter to Tralles

Letter to Rome - “Grant me nothing more than to be poured out as an offering to God while there is still an altar ready. . . . Just pray that I will have the strength both outwardly and inwardly so that I may not just talk about it but want to do it, that I might not merely be called a Christian, but actually prove to be one. . . . **I am writing to all the churches and am insisting to everyone that I die for God of my own free will Let me be food for the wild beasts. . . . Coax the wild beasts, that they may become my tomb.**” 2.2; 3.2; 4.1-2.



Ignatius

“It is better for me to die for Jesus Christ than to rule over the ends of the earth” (To the Romans 6.1.).

Letter to the church of Philadelphia

Letter to the church of Smyrna

Letter to Polycarp

“Strive after more knowledge than you have.”

“Be more zealous than you are.”

“Flee the arts of the devil.”

Genuineness of the letters

Farrar, Schaff, McClintock/Strong, original documents.

Justin Martyr

Name and sources for information:

“I, Justin, the son of Priscus, and grandson of Bacchius, natives of Flavis Neapolis in Palestine.”

“I am an uncircumcised man” (*Dialogue with Trypho* 28).

Justin’s theology and philosophy:

Stoics Peripatetic Pythagorean Platonists

Justin’s conversion to Christianity

Dialogue with Trypho

Justin Martyr

“There existed, long before this time, certain men more ancient than all those who are esteemed philosophers, both righteous and beloved by God, who spoke by the Divine Spirit, and foretold events which would take place, and which are now taking place. They are called prophets. These alone both saw and announced the truth to men, neither reverencing nor fearing any man, not influenced by a desire for glory, but speaking those things alone which they saw and which they heard, being filled with the Holy Spirit. Their writings are still extant, and he who has read them is very much helped in his knowledge of the beginning and end of things, and of those matters which the philosopher ought to know, provided he has believed them.”
Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 7.

Justin Martyr

Apologies

Trypho Crescens Marcion

Martyrdom of Justin

Simeon Metaphrastes Eusebius *H.E.* 4.16.

Rusticus

What does Justin tell us about the church in the middle of the 2nd century?

(Farrar, Grant, Schaff; Eusebius *H.E.*; *Dialogue with Trypho*)

Monasticism

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- González, Justo L. *Monasticism: Patterns of Piety*. Nashville, TN: Graded Press, 1988.
- Harmless, William. *Desert Christians: An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Hepburne-Scott, P. J. *Religious Orders of Men*. New York: Hawthorn Books, 1960.
- Nigg, Walter. *Warriors of God: The Great Religious Orders and Their Founders*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959.
- Schaff, Philip. *History of the Christian Church*. Reprint edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1910.

Monasticism

Monachism = Monasticism

General comments

My fascination with it

St. Catherine's at Mt. Sinai

Mount Athos



Monasticism

Changes due to Constantine

Non-Christian background

Brahmanism & Hinduism

Buddhism & Jainism

Pythagoreans

Gnostics & Manicheans

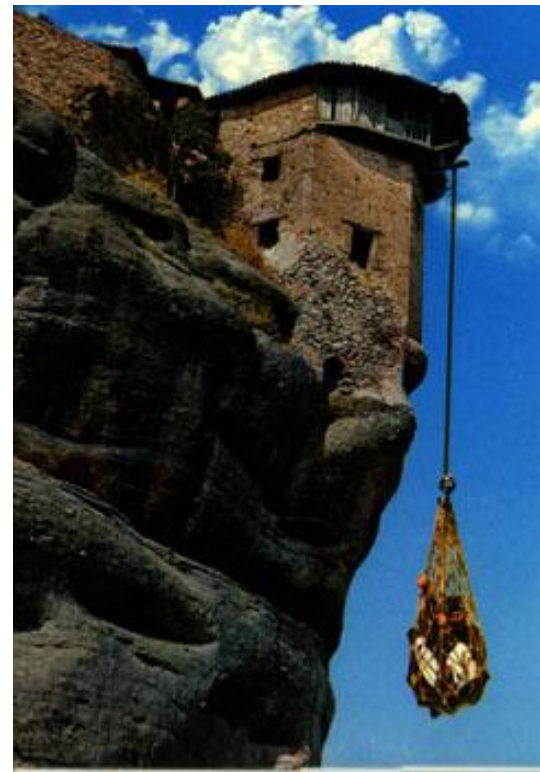
Philo and Origen

Essenes

Heresy, apostasy view

Multiple sources/influences view

Pre-Nicene asceticism



Four Stages of Monasticism

1. Ascetics within the church

2. Hermit life or anchoretism

Diocletian

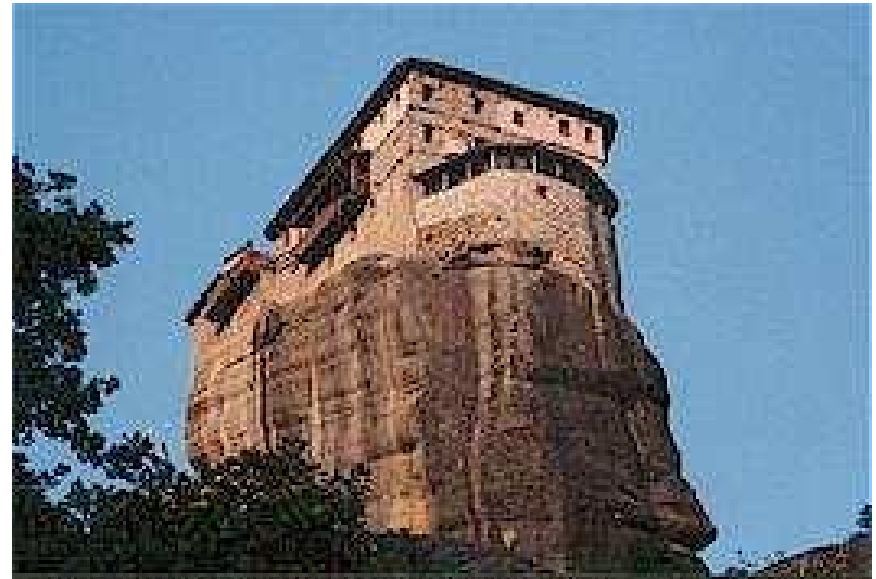
Anthony

3. Cenobitism or communal
monasticism

Pachomius

Benedict

4. Monastic orders



Brief History of Monasticism

1. Paul of Thebes

Decian persecution

Jerome

Anathas & Macarius

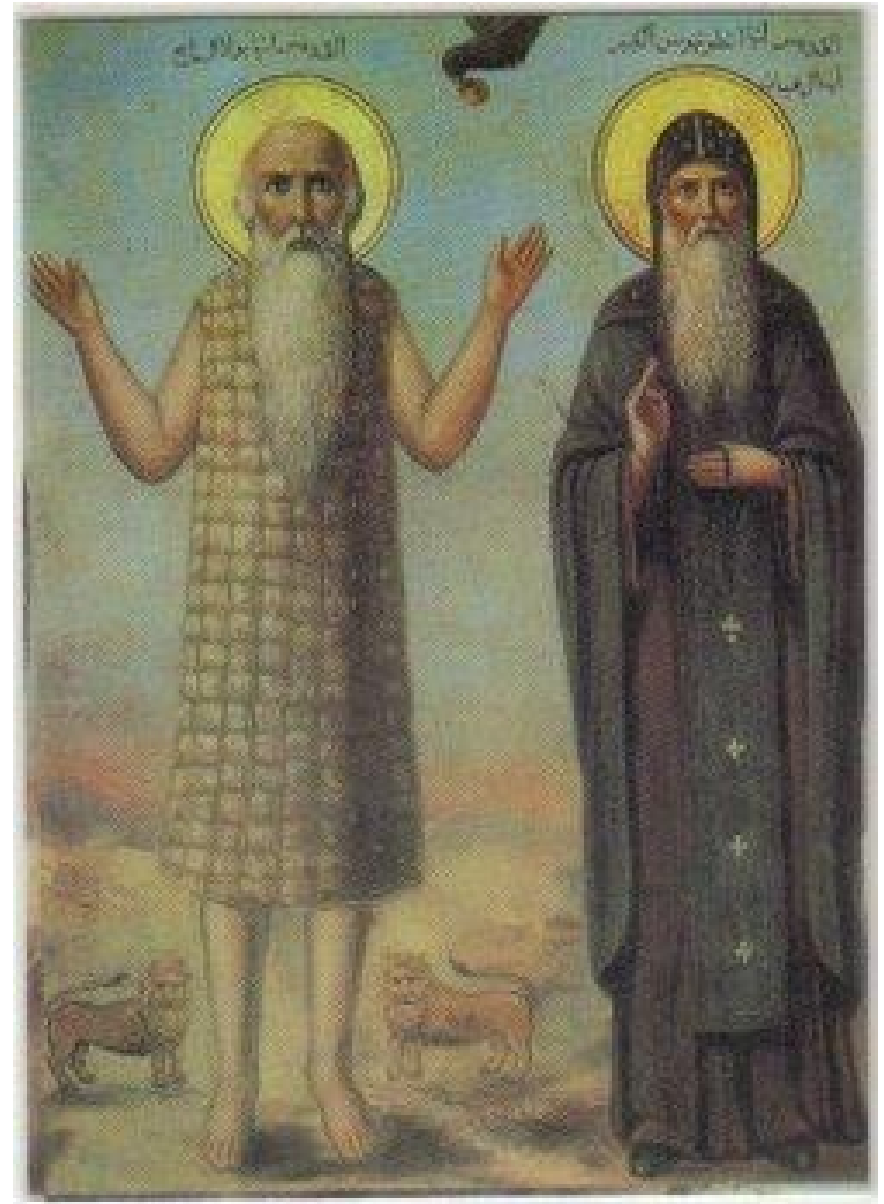
(Coptic icon of Paul of Thebes and Anthony) --->

2. Anthony

Mount Colzim

Didymus

“If you take me for a fool, your labor is lost; but if I am a wise man, you should imitate me, and be Christians, as I am.”



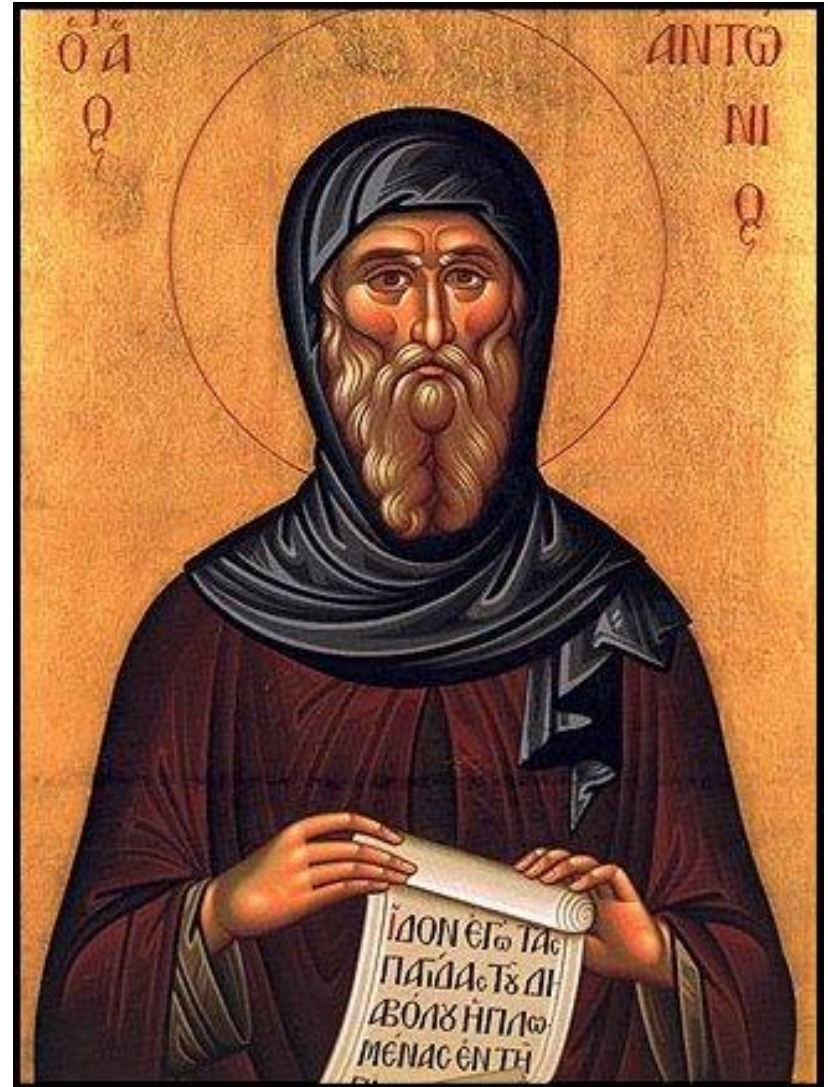
Brief History of Monasticism

2. Anthony (continued)

“My book is the whole creation, which lies open before me, and in which I can read the word of God as often as I will.”

“Don’t be troubled because of the loss of your outward eye, with which even flies see, but rejoice in the possession of the spiritual eye, with which angels behold the face of God and receive his light”

“Happy are you that you worship Christ. Don’t be proud of your earthly power. Think of the future judgment, and know that Christ is the only true and eternal king. Practice justice and love for men. Care for the poor.”



Brief History of Monasticism

2. Anthony (continued)

“Don’t be amazed that the emperor writes to me, because he is just a man. Wonder much more that God has written the law for man, and has spoken to us by his own Son.”

Martianus

“Man, why do you call on me? I am a man like you. If you believe, pray to God and he will hear you.”

Serapion

Athanasius

“What gave him his renown was not learning, nor worldly wisdom, nor human art, but alone his piety toward God....And let all the brothers know that the Lord will not only take holy monks to heaven, but give them celebrity in all the earth, however deep they may bury themselves in the wilderness.”

Chrysostom

Nitria



Brief History of Monasticism

3. Hilarion

4. Simeon

Lord Alfred Tennyson, St. Simeon Stylites

Although I be the basest of mankind,
From scalp to sole one slough and crust of sin,
Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce meet
For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,
I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold
Of saintdom, and to clamour, mourn and sob,
Battering the gates of heaven with storms of
prayer,
Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin.



Brief History of Monasticism

4. Simeon

Lord Alfred Tennyson, St. Simeon Stylites

Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty God,
This not be all in vain, that thrice ten years,
Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,
In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,
In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes and cramps,
A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,
Patient on this tall pillar I have borne
Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and sleet, and snow;
And I had hoped that ere this period closed
Thou wouldst have caught me up into thy rest,
Denying not these weather-beaten limbs
The meed [merited gift, wages] of saints, the white robe
and the palm. . . .



Brief History of Monasticism

4. Simeon - Lord Alfred Tennyson, St. Simeon Stylites

O Lord, Lord,
Thou knowest I bore this better at the first,
For I was strong and hale of body then;
And though my teeth, which now are dropped away,
Would chatter with the cold, and all my beard
Was tagged with icy fringes in the moon,
I drowned the whoopings of the owl with sound
Of pious hymns and psalms, and sometimes saw
An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.
Now am I feeble grown; my end draws nigh;
I hope my end draws nigh: half deaf I am,
So that I scarce can hear the people hum
About the column's base, and almost blind,
And scarce can recognize the fields I know;
And both my thighs are rotted with the dew;
Yet cease I not to clamour and to cry,
While my stiff spine can hold my weary head,
Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the stone,
Have mercy, mercy: take away my sin.



Brief History of Monasticism

4. Simeon - Lord Alfred Tennyson, St. Simeon Stylites

O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,
Who may be saved? who is it may be saved?
Who may be made a saint, if I fail here?
Show me the man hath suffered more than I.
For did not all thy martyrs die one death?
For either they were stoned, or crucified, . . .

Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all the saints
Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men on earth
House in the shade of comfortable roofs,
Sit with their wives by fires, eat wholesome food,
And wear warm clothes, and even beasts have stalls,
I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the light,
Bow down one thousand and two hundred times,
To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the Saints....

Theodoret



Brief History of Monasticism

5. Pachomius

Palemon

Basil the Great

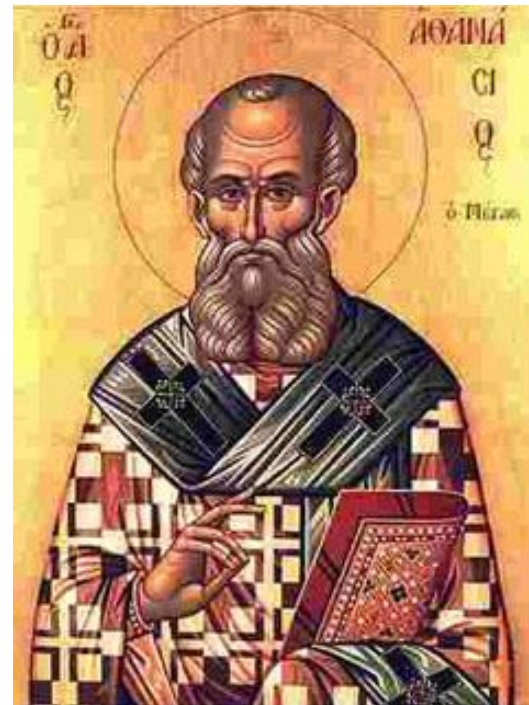
Rufinus



6. Athanasius

Ammonius

Isidore



Brief History of Monasticism

7. Jerome

Eustochium

How often, when I was living in the desert, in the vast solitude which gives to hermits a savage dwelling-place, parched by a burning sun, how often did I fancy myself among the pleasures of Rome. . . . Now, although in my fear of hell I had consigned myself to this prison, where I had no companions but scorpions and wild beasts, I often found myself amid bevvies of girls. My face was pale and my frame chilled with fasting; yet my mind was burning with desire, and the fires of lust kept bubbling up before me when my flesh was as good as dead. Helpless, I cast myself at the feet of Jesus, I watered them with my tears, I wiped them with my hair: and then I subdued my rebellious body with weeks of abstinence (Jerome, *Epistle 22.7*).



Brief History of Monasticism

7. Jerome

I lately saw the noblest lady in Rome—I suppress her name, for I am no satirist—with a band of eunuchs before her in the basilica of the blessed Peter. She was giving money to the poor, a coin apiece; and this with her own hand, that she might be accounted more religious. Hereupon a by no means uncommon incident occurred. An old woman, “full of years and rags,” ran forward to get a second coin, but when her turn came she received not a penny but a blow hard enough to draw blood from her guilty veins (Jerome, *Epistle 22.32*).



Brief History of Monasticism

7. Jerome

A brother, more thrifty than covetous, and ignorant that the Lord had been sold for thirty pieces of silver, left behind him at his death a hundred pieces of money which he had earned by weaving linen. As there were about five thousand monks in the neighborhood, living in as many separate cells, a council was held as to what should be done. Some said that the coins should be distributed among the poor; others that they should be given to the church, while others were for sending them back to the relatives of the deceased. However, Macarius, Pambo, Isidore and the rest of those called fathers, speaking by the Spirit, decided that they should be interred with their owner, with the words: “Thy money perish with thee.” (Jerome, *Epistle 22.33*).



Brief History of Monasticism

7. Jerome - to Heliodorus

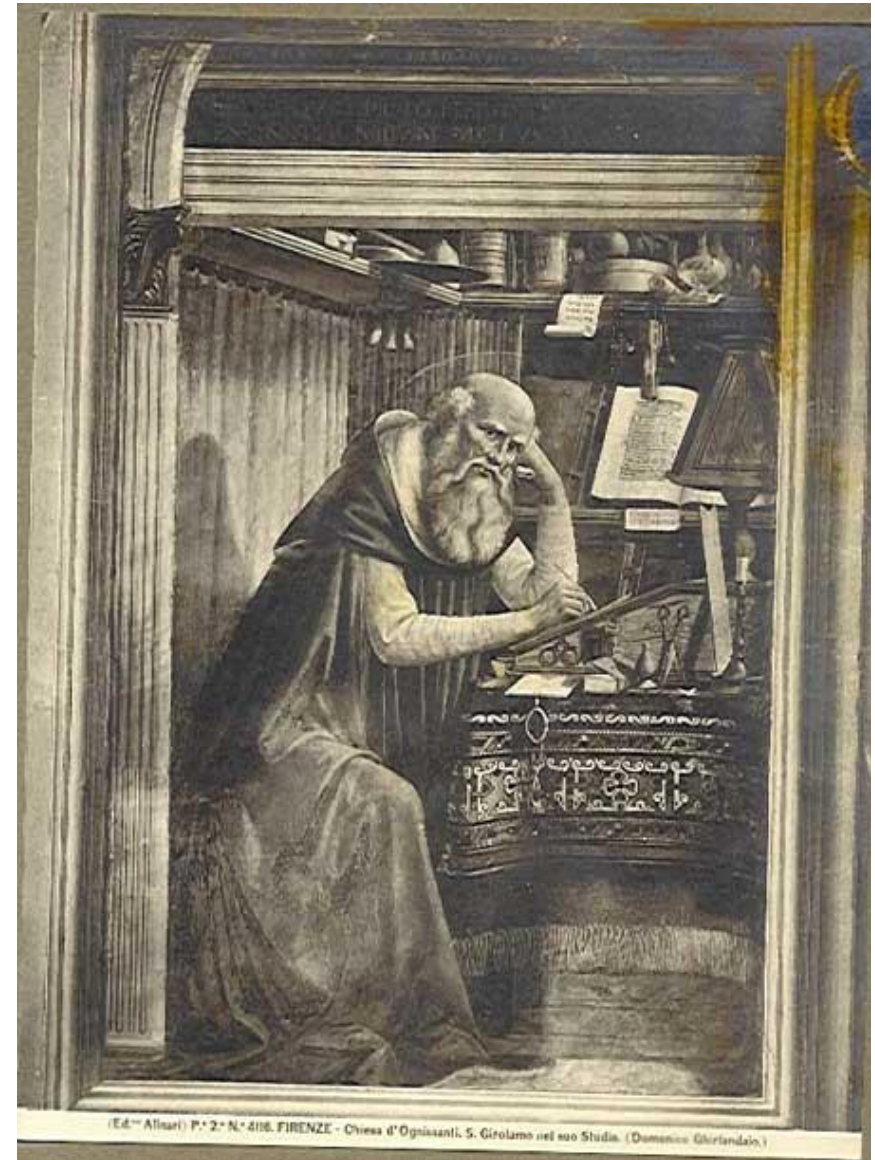
Lo, the enemy is striving to slay Christ in your breast.... Should your little nephew hang on your neck, pay no regard to him; should your mother with ashes on her hair and garments rent show you the breasts at which she nursed you, heed her not; should your father prostrate himself on the threshold, trample him under foot and go your way. With dry eyes fly to the standard of the cross. In such cases cruelty is the only true affection....O desert, bright with the flowers of Christ! O solitude whence come the stones of which, in the Apocalypse, the city of the great king is built! O wilderness, gladdened with God's especial presence! What keeps you in the world, my brother, you who are above the world? (Jerome, *Epistle 14.2*).



Brief History of Monasticism

7. Jerome

Does toil frighten you? No athlete is crowned but in the sweat of his brow. Are you anxious as regards food? Faith fears no famine. Do you dread the bare ground for limbs wasted with fasting? The Lord lies there beside you. Do you recoil from an unwashed head and uncombed hair? Christ is your true head.²⁵ Does the boundless solitude of the desert terrify you? In the spirit you may walk always in paradise. Do but turn your thoughts thither and you will be no more in the desert. Is your skin rough and scaly because you no longer bathe? He that is once washed in Christ needeth not to wash again. (Jerome, *Epistle* 14.20).



Brief History of Monasticism

8. Benedict

Nursia

Monte Cassino

The rule



Brief History of Monasticism

8. Gregory of Nazianzus

Cappadocia

Constantius

“There is a danger of the noblest of all offices becoming a by-word among us. For promotion depends not on virtue, but villainy; and the sacred thrones fall not to the most worthy but to the most powerful....Physicians must first study the nature of diseases and painters must gain experience in handling colors and in drawing; but a prelate is easily found, without serious training, with a reputation of recent date, sown and sprung up in a moment” (*Panegyric on Basil*).



Brief History of Monasticism

8. Gregory of Nazianzus (continued)

Thecla

“I am of a mind to avoid all gatherings of bishops, for never have I seen one that produced any useful result or composed any difference of opinion. Rather the trouble, whatever it was, was aggravated. For there is ever contention in them, and ambition and talking competitions, and people make accusations against one another rather than come to terms.”

(Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Macrina. Macrina was the sister of Basil and Gregory of Nyssa.)



Purpose of Monasticism

Three vows - celibacy, poverty, obedience

H. Richard Niebuhr

Life in the Monastery

Macedonius Marcarius Isidore

John Chrysostom

“Before the rising of the sun they rise, hale and sober, sing as with one mouth hymns to the praise of God, then bow the knee in prayer, under the direction of the abbot, read the holy Scriptures, and go to their labors; pray again at nine, twelve, and three o’clock; after a good day’s work, enjoy a simple meal of bread and salt, perhaps with oil, and sometimes with peas (pulse, lentils, beans); sing a thanksgiving hymn, and lay themselves on their pallets of straw without care, grief or murmur. When one dies, they say: ‘He is perfected;’ and all pray to God for a similar end, that they also may come to the eternal sabbath-rest and to the vision of Christ.”

Purpose of Monasticism

Schaff - “It forms the romantic shady side of the otherwise so tedious monotony of the secluded life, and contains much material for the history of ethics, psychology, and pathology.”

Schaff – “There is more virtue in the temperate and thankful enjoyment of the gifts of God, than in total abstinence; in charitable and well-seasoned speech, than in total silence; in connubial chastity [chaste marital relations], than in celibacy; in self-denying practical labor for the church, than in solitary asceticism, which only pleases self and profits no one else.”

Position of Monks in the Church

Jerome – “A monk has not the office of a teacher, but of a penitent, who endures suffering either for himself or for the world.”

Athanasius and Ammonius

The Significance of the Monastic System on Early Christianity

Dean Milman – “It was not monasticism, as such, which has proved a blessing to the church and the world; for the monasticism of India, which for three thousand years has pushed the practice of mortification to all the excesses of delirium, never saved a single soul, nor produced a single benefit to the race. It was *Christianity* in monasticism which has done all the good, and used this abnormal mode of life as a means for carrying forward its mission of love and peace. In proportion as monasticism was animated and controlled by the spirit of Christianity, it proved a blessing; while separated from it, it degenerated and became a fruitful source of evil.”



