The Monastary of Saint Catherine, Sinai

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A small chapel was constructed about 330 at the site of the burning bush where Moses heard the angel of the Lord, according to the book of Exodus. And howering over this secluded setting is Mount Sinai (Gebel Musa) where the tablets of The Law were handed over to Moses. So from an early date ascetics and later small communities gathered here, until raids from nomadic bedouins made emperor Justinian construct a fortification around the new church and the older installations about 550. Ever since, the monastery in Sinai has been a favorite place of pilgrimage only surpassed by the Vatican in Rome and Jerusalem,

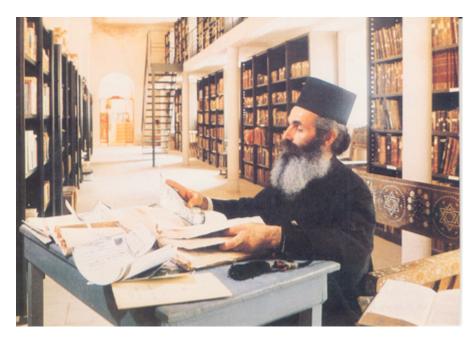


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This isolated outpost of Christianity obtained a charter from the Prophet Muhammad, thus securing the lives and property of the monks. Some doubt this charter is genuine, but the fact remains that it has been respected as the will of the Prophet by the Arabs as well as the Turks. An authenticated copy of the charter stamped with the hand of Muhammad is still in the library of the monastery.

يرقر فصالك انصور تقريرة مع البانعون di ferre ais - 1850 - du يصحيح بجت ويشتكم الملاذهان تسبر وتعقق ذهار وفتامق يديدكون بلله مانج درافع العلقوبهجند الحقاء وألى الأفاع تقرائه المدومانه تعريره ميشا لامعطالي دياكه دماعد تهاه كر الاجروا عراطا المال العالموا winem cierce لمدكرتن فيصيعه إنسكلهم مصاخرته أيحر ودعهدك الديوشاعة الألاونلومية للعاب وصنعدته عنهاى ووويرة توجد والمرجر ووجرانيدك لاعلال بنالد الرة مفاحد فالج مذارات ومقاحرة فالموجود بالمطارج كد وطيرا فاحدد فالاس رهاندت وفدمين واحظم وحافكو للوطوس adation ترعرا وملك براك بزاده فلاسعاق العالج بجث لوكريدة بفاع والدورك فالاجاد عفظ وقراد متارعكيره فلأادندر يوحده تتاه طعرت فلج وروالوحنياج المخصاصفياج إيا وتاحضه وكمغط ومؤسكو وطيتره شويقسطه واصعل احكام شريقد قواغاء اصلاط والاعتدانية نبوباك صريقك وسال احكام كمادديدهريقعا و فالمذكرة معاقل وزيرات ملحا والم ومعمولي وشكانى موزور ومساف مراحل معرو مرتدين ماهرا متبة تؤبران لعل امتست وكربوعي الته معا فيلا فعالية ولي عالية والمعاد لي عام المعالية والمعالية والم بدر داهو زمترر درخی زواره دوزارا خراج کین وغیرغری اخدکام افبراره سياحلنك سياحشنه متحاقيدات وكعبسالك مالنه يتليص كالما وكمندما للرزم الارتر تغيره في من مست مضاحد وعلومات کا بستان کی سال تحقیق منتخاب میں ملک صفاح هر رو انجر بالار رونی سال است کا مستخلی میں مسلح مقروبیا وہ سروریا وہ سرورتر کا من دور کا من رمینه منابع معلم هر به ایج والار والی تشاوین علی معلم معلم معلم می مودود و این ماه می دود. ما و معلمات دست مادر بعدیده وغر در ایج وساله جمل معلم و معلم و معرف می مودود و از این منه می دود بر و معیاب خلع ایج معرف مادر بازی در معادم در ای را هم در معلمه معلم معلمه معلمه معلمه معلم ایر و سینه می مودود و رسود و را مع و و معرف محمد مورد این با سرد در این و در این و در معانه معان و سعا زمینی و ساله و سینه معاون و معال معان و مع و این معرف مودین و در این این و در این و در این و در معانه معان و معاد زمینی و معاد و در معان و معان و معان م معاد واعرف والمالى أوله ودعد المرتحة والم المد س الله ولاي المدرجك سيالما المرجع فيله جلك ومروح بالتجامل فرقيد والمقطى المعارفة، كما عامل ويدون فيهود فالد المطالب المعالية في من المنافقة الموروتين التي المسالمة المسوورة. ويدون فيهود فالد المطالب المعالية في مراجع المعالية الموروتين المعالية المواجع المعالية المواجع المعالية المعال 6 all reversion They where they storing alexiated · built site time بدخرا تشدد عجت نوبك أبنى فالأبري حامدهم الجوالي عليد وبلازوالت ملك وأيله ووضع المشعريهاى جده الصالى طلالمضامة بالمناجات لقلاده تدربومة لابوزرته فيده فترطط فلهنه واهر طارقه في الازواع علد دكتاب ايال الذاج ترجه بإذعلى للا وطلوت جذبي بالى تالقذه ماه جلاك العالمة وط ناري مال ا شايجرة بلاكل كور الحالالج مرادم استباسير ومناسيد ومناد المتد والمقار وأواحت متبطرت هري بلوت أزايتر مع مواصله موجروم فتعرضه مام موان تنقلوا و تت قضاده دمی اشتید بدی 5 بدین صفاردیک درتیا دگوره تشاونده معبر دفیقاری از دینداند. معدا اطوی دمقاریجا جزيمتني الارزيد ويعاعليك اسدة والمريك هماك منطق الاقتراط لماعت وملالك الالادرتية مساعه لاغذه بوتشطا تخترع والازير ويرونيه أيرمع ل فسيكار مشرون ره برديد لامته مشكل دفراعيدة اجتنابيه ايدو يوطودارن بوطودار وهيلاكام ت حاصل بخت ادانوا بجوز طوی مادی در ز وفنع بولتيكم لدى الاقتصار لباز واظها يصويخها غادا فدتميه والنظم احدى دفرانير وسيعه

The **Library**, by function the oldest monastic library in Christendom, is now located in a large new wing, built in fireproof concrete in 1951 on the south-western side of the monastery. It's over ten meters wide by fifteen meters long and its precious codices and manuscripts are stored and shelved on the upper floor.



The library represents one of the richest monastic collections in the world, containing over six thousands volumes and manuscripts. As an organized entity in a specific area the library may not date back to the founding, but naturally the early manuscripts must have been kept somewhere. In the 13th century books were kept in the lectern of the basillica, and from 9th century onwards a scriptorium for the illumination and copying of manuscripts has been in operation. Not until 1761 an organized library is reported by a westener, Vitaliano Donati:

"In this Monastery I found a huge quantity of parchments manuscripts, many of which had been placed in a library, others tossed into a filthy cupboard. Almost all are of parchment, and most of them are Greek." (1761)

Nikephoros Marthalis Glykos, archbishop of Sinai 1706, was much in favour of the improvement of the library facilities and he completed a new library building and drew up the first catalogue of the collection:

"After seeing the manuscripts I found scattered about and neglected, some in cupboards, others in niches and cells, my conscience stabbed me and I put them into the care of the overseer of books, the most learned of holy teachers....who after much labour and care gathered all the books up from every corner, listing them in proper order, and arranging them as seemed best in a library, according to the judgement of..., and after much reflection on the matter by....and all the brothers." (1734).

A great quantity of manuscripts were discovered in 1975 while work was in progress on restoring the north wall. At least 1.100 separate manuscripts appeared, fragmentary or complete, maybe those mentioned by Donati in 1761, hidden and thrown in a filthy cupboard next to those shelved in Marthalis new library from 1734.

The library houses more than 3.000 Greek manuscripts, as well as 700 Arabic and a few more hundreds Syriac, Georgian, Slavonic texts and a handfull of Armenian, Latin, Persian, Polish, Ethiopian and Coptic manuscripts. The broad selection of languages is rather unique and reflects the widespread influence of the monastery. The manuscripts are mostly written on parchment or paper, some 400 are on papyri. Most are in book form, but more than 150 are scrolls making the collection one of the most important collections of scrols worldwide. It makes sense that the isolation and inaccessibility of the monastery have promoted the monks use of books and manuscripts. In times of danger books and manuscripts were hidden, often carried away in big baskets with lid, like the one still on display in the small museum.

Codex Sinaiticus, dated to the middle of the 4th century, this codex is with Codex Vaticanus one of the two earliest copies of the whole Greek Bible, Septuaginta. The codex was in 1859 'borrowed' for copying and later taken to St. Petersburg by Konstantin von Tischendorf, a German scholar who cheated the monks of their valuable manuscript. Today the codex is in The British Library, sold by The Soviet Union to the UK for £100.000 in 1935. Nevertheless, the monastery still claims it back to where it belongs.



The Archive contains documents, letters and files mainly in Greek but also in Arabic. Only few documents are preserved from the Byzantine period as contact with Constatinople was cut during the occupation of the peninsula from the 7th century. During Napoleon I's campaign in Egypt 1798-1801 he assisted in the rebuilding of the collapsed northern wall of the monastery. Further Napoleon issued a special decree on December 8th, 1798, confirming the privileges of the monks.



References.

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Rev. by Pierre Evald 07-04-06