

and monastic settlements rely on the same technologies and spatial syntaxes, so that it is frequently difficult to determine if an excavated late antique settlement was a village or a monastery without detailed examination. Often the final determination depends on texts, inscriptions, and wall paintings. And often monasteries were integrated into the larger patterns of settlement—built as parts of villages, adjacent to them, or in easy travel distance from them. When Brooks Hedstrom turns to looking at individual examples, the range and repertory of scale and setting can be dramatic—with large, well-visible establishments, such as Apa Jeremias near Memphis, standing in sharp contrast to smaller, isolated foundations hidden in the landscape, such as the Topos of Apa Phoibammon in the Rock.

Finally, Brooks Hedstrom offers an elegantly nuanced view of the relationship between monastic siting and the landscape. She emphasizes a preference, in many instances, for what she calls *underutilized* landscapes: abandoned sites that could be reclaimed or the reuse of quarries, tombs, and natural cavities. Brooks Hedstrom analyzes how these particular sites fit within larger theoretical perspectives of space, place and landscape. I occasionally grimaced at the frequent name-dropping of theorists and anthropologists, but this is a minor complaint for a study that is rich in both detail and perspective.

If there is a criticism to be aimed at this excellent study, it is in the use of illustrations. They are limited in number, poorly reproduced, often difficult to interpret, and not well integrated with the text. Plans are limited and usually presented without identification of components; many sites and spaces are described in detail but left unillustrated. I often found myself puzzling over a site description that one good illustration could have easily clarified. For a study of this richness, more and better illustrations are absolutely necessary. Their absence limits the value and accessibility of an otherwise commendable study.

Robert Ousterhout  
University of Pennsylvania  
doi:10.1017/S0009640720000165

***The Second Gift of the Nile: Monks and Monasteries in Late Antique Egypt.* By Ewa Wipszycka. Translated by Damian Jasiński. Supplements to the Journal of Juristic Papyrology 33. Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018. xxvi + 565 pp. \$85.00 hardcover.**

In a brief review such as this, it would be easy to take for granted the exciting significance of a book in English about monastic Egypt by a scholar as respected as Ewa Wipszycka. *The Second Gift of the Nile* builds (by Wipszycka's explicit admission) on two of several previous major monographs—one in French and one in Polish—with adjustments, developments, updates, and fuller treatment of the Pachomian literature and of Shenoute (in some ways his successor, albeit settled somewhat north of the great Theban bend). Yet, here and there, Wipszycka does identify pathways for further or fresh inquiry.

A book of this nature from so authoritative a figure presents us with an invaluable summation of decades of research and food for thought about where to turn next. Immediately characteristic of the author is the division of the book (after an

introduction) into two major parts: “The Great Monastic Texts” and “How the Monks Lived.” Economics and archaeology have always been Wipszycka’s strong points, and the second part brings them into high relief; but here, sociology also receives due attention, as does relations between the clergy.

Unfortunately, this standard two-piece division has always proved methodologically shaky. Wipszycka herself makes an important attempt to show how the “gap,” if that is the right word, might be bridged in chapter 8, “Methodological Considerations: How Can We Separate Literary Reality from ‘Real’ Reality?” She places her trust in papyri, which do have a material quality associated with the archaeology that often brings them to light. They are, nevertheless, texts; and they raise issues of genre, authorial intent, and audience reaction in ways that stonework and floor plans do not.

Turning back, therefore, to the “great” texts, I was struck at once by the immense variety in analytical depth Wipszycka devoted to the various works she analyzed. She begins with the *Life of Antony*, to which she devotes some eighty pages, within which she describes in detail the debates the text has given rise to. It is a vitally useful summary. It ends with a slightly weary acknowledgement of “narrative reality” (105) but no vivid sense that there are more leads to follow—only the very welcome implication that the text provides us with two “voices,” Athanasius and Antony; it is a plea, or series of pleas, not a description. Take, by contrast, the treatment of Cassian, who merits only six pages in the first part of the book. This reflects, of course, Wipszycka’s feeling that Cassian is an unreliable witness to Egyptian practice; but he does pop up here and there in the second part, even if mainly to have his errors unmasked.

Rather better, I feel, are the chapters on the *Historia monachorum in Aegypto* (I agree that Rufinus’s use of the Greek text tells us more about his squabbles with Jerome) and the *Lausiac History* of Palladius. These are enormous fun as problematic texts, especially the eventual form of the *Lausiac History*, and Wipszycka has precisely the patience and stored knowledge to unravel the mysteries as they have been so far explored. Texts are not only written and read but also take on a life of their own and intertwine over decades, even centuries, in ways that can fox the less carefully informed. *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (Benedicta Ward, trans. [Cistercian, 1974]) invites similar scrutiny, but here the author’s account is disappointingly briefer.

Not surprisingly, the second half of the book is full of greater wonders and invaluable reflections on where and why monks pursued their ideals, in what sort of company, with what resources, and with what deference to the wider church. I am no archaeologist, but I am constantly amazed at how exhaustively, learnedly, and clearly Wipszycka scans the remarkably varied surface of the “monastic habitat,” alert to every implication of what it was like to live among these people. I just wish she was sometimes more willing to say: “This is where we should now be quizzing and burrowing, and for these reasons.” The cautious reticence of one who knows so much has preserved the achievement of a lifetime but left us to work out for ourselves where she thinks it is leading us.

Philip Rousseau  
The Catholic University of America  
doi:10.1017/S0009640720000177