

Coptic monasticism and the Egyptian monasteries



Agenda

- Coptic Monasticism - Definition
- Coptic Monasticism - History
- Egyptian monasteries

In Christian life, the effect of monasticism in relation to the church is like the role of the heart in relation to the body. It preserves life.

Coptic Monasticism - Definition

Monasticism is a way of life to rid the inner self of materialism

Monasticism is based on deprivation of everything, live humbly and in contemplation in its highest level

Coptic Monasticism - Definition

To execute the word of the Holy Bible:

“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.” (1John 2:15-17)

Coptic Monasticism - History

St. Antony

The father of the monks
*a wealthy man of Alexandria,
left for the nearby desert in
about 270 AD established the
Hermetic System of
Monasticism and became the
father of all the monks all over
the world*



Coptic Monasticism - History

Saint Anthony had left for the desert after hearing the Gospel in Church which was, "If you want to be perfect, go, and sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me" (Matthew 19:21).



Coptic Monasticism - History

*the Greek word monachos,
according to its earliest
attestations,
described the ascetic who was
a "solitary" life*



Coptic Monasticism - History

St. Pachom (320 A.D.)

The father of the Koinonia
*established the life of Cenobitic
Monasticism in upper Egypt,
which many orders of
monasticism still follow, he
started the buildings of
monasteries for women*



Coptic Monasticism - History

**St. Macarius the great (330
A.D.)**

The father of the Scetis

*Established the monastic rule
called 'Laura', which had all
the advantages of the two
previous rules*



Coptic Monasticism - History

Monks lived individually but near one another and assembled together every Saturday evening, until Sunday, for spiritual talks; they also celebrated the liturgy, which was followed by an 'agape' meal which they shared before returning to their cells.



Coptic Monasticism - History

The spreading of Monasticism throughout the whole world

Monasticism spread throughout the Eastern and Western deserts of Egypt; from the Northern coast to Nubia. Before the Arab conquest of Egypt (641 A.D.), there were around five thousand monasteries and nunneries.

Coptic Monasticism - History

The spreading of Monasticism throughout the whole world

Monasticism spread from Egypt to the world through the Coptic monks and through the visits done by external visitors to the monasteries (Like John Cassian, Hilary of Gaza, etc..) and through the pilgrimage ceremonies to the holy places in palestine, it spread to the West through the Coptic monks who were preaching in Ireland, and from there to Scotland and the rest of Europe.

Coptic Monasteries

The monastery

Monasteries in the early days were cells built distant from each other with a church in the middle to celebrate the holy liturgy each Sunday and the monks gathered from Saturday night to pray together

After the liturgy they ate together and left afterwards each one to his own cell

Coptic Monasteries

***The monastery-
the walls and
gate***

*The to protect the
cells from thieves
living in the
desert, a
deffensive wall
was built with a
small gate for
entrance*



Coptic Monasteries

The Monks cells
In Pakhomian life



Useful References

- Evelyn-White, H. G. The History of the Monasteries of Nitria and of Scetis, Pt. 2, The Monasteries of the Wadi'n Natrun. New York,
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- l'histoire du monachisme chrétien." Revue d'ascétique et de
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The monastery of St. Anthony Eastern Desert of Egypt

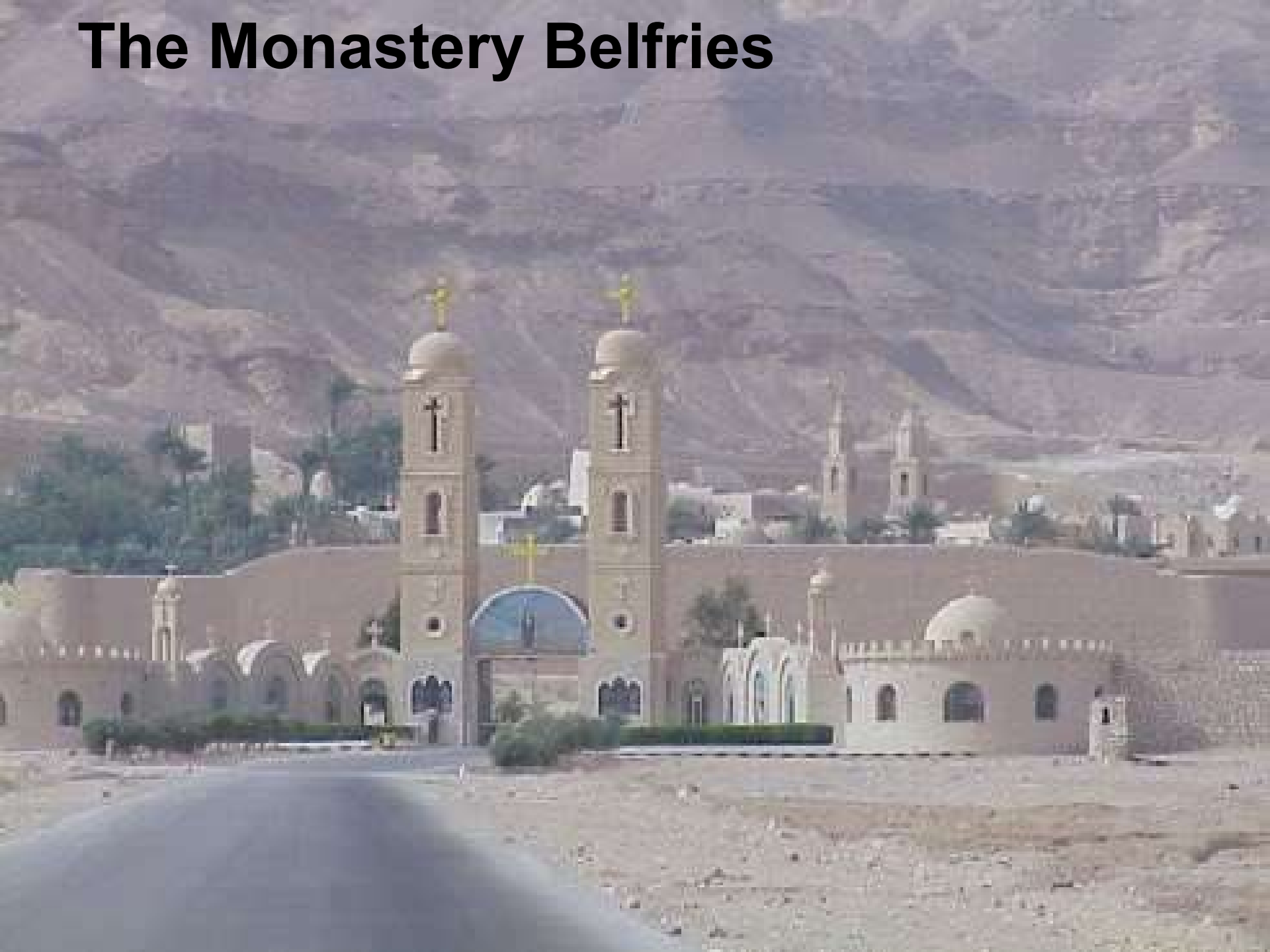


A high view of the monastery

The external gate of the monastery



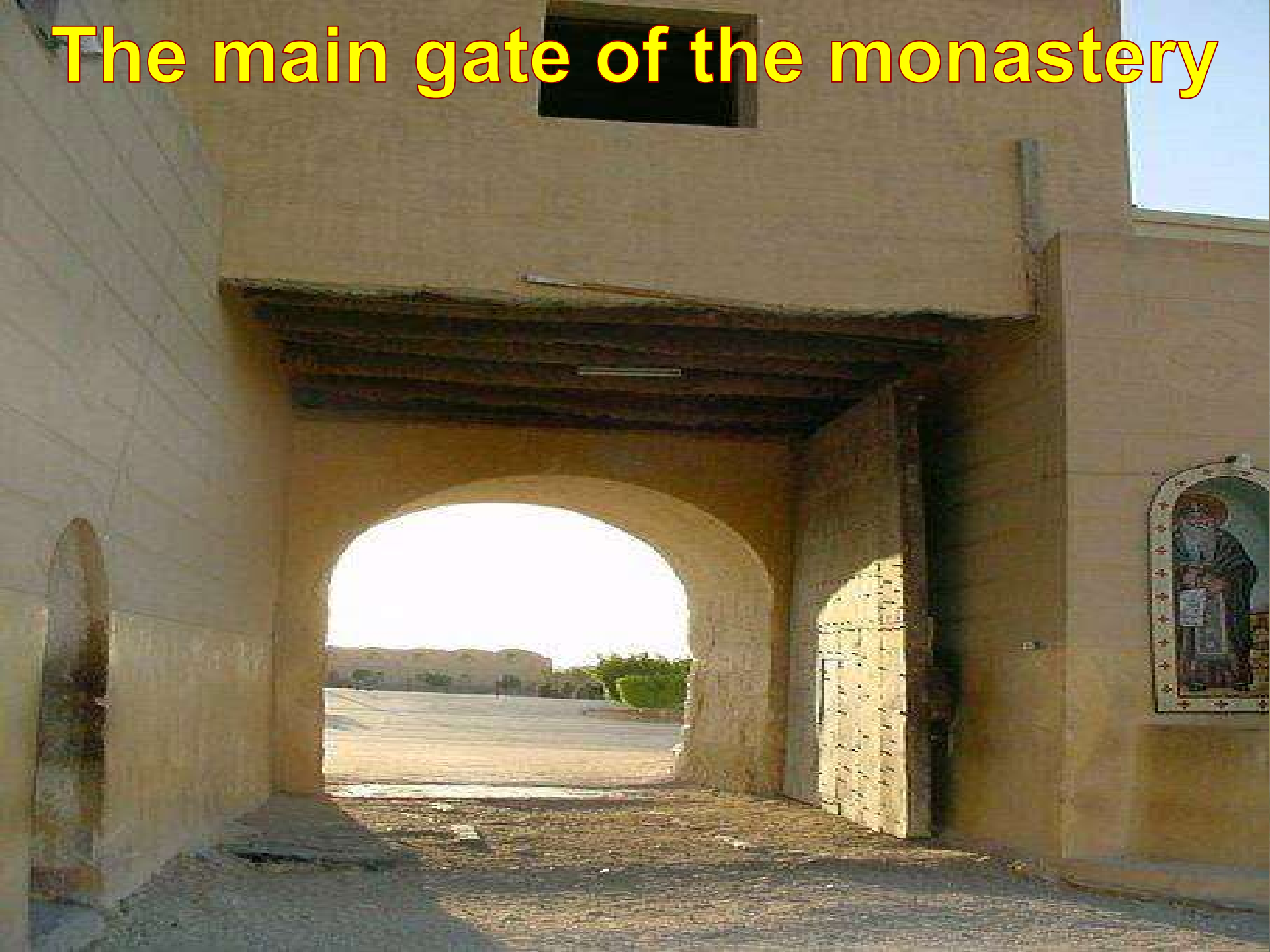
The Monastery Belfries



THE BELL



The main gate of the monastery



The passage leading
to the cells





The monastery garden

The 2 Belfries





The church of St. Mark El-Anthony



The church of St. Paula and St. Anthony



The retreat house





The monks while praising

The ancient fort



The ancient fort



The external fence of the monastery



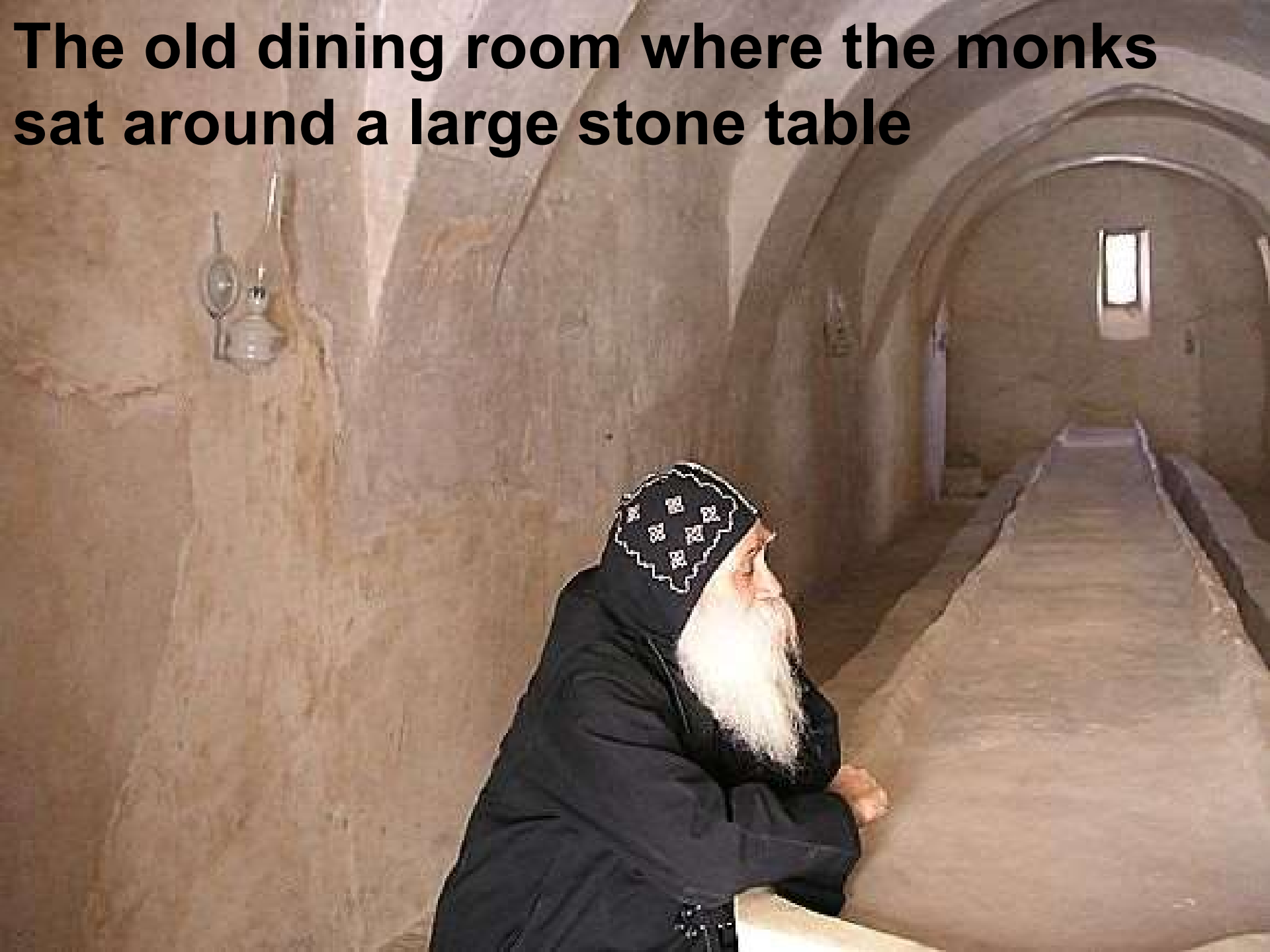
The old cells

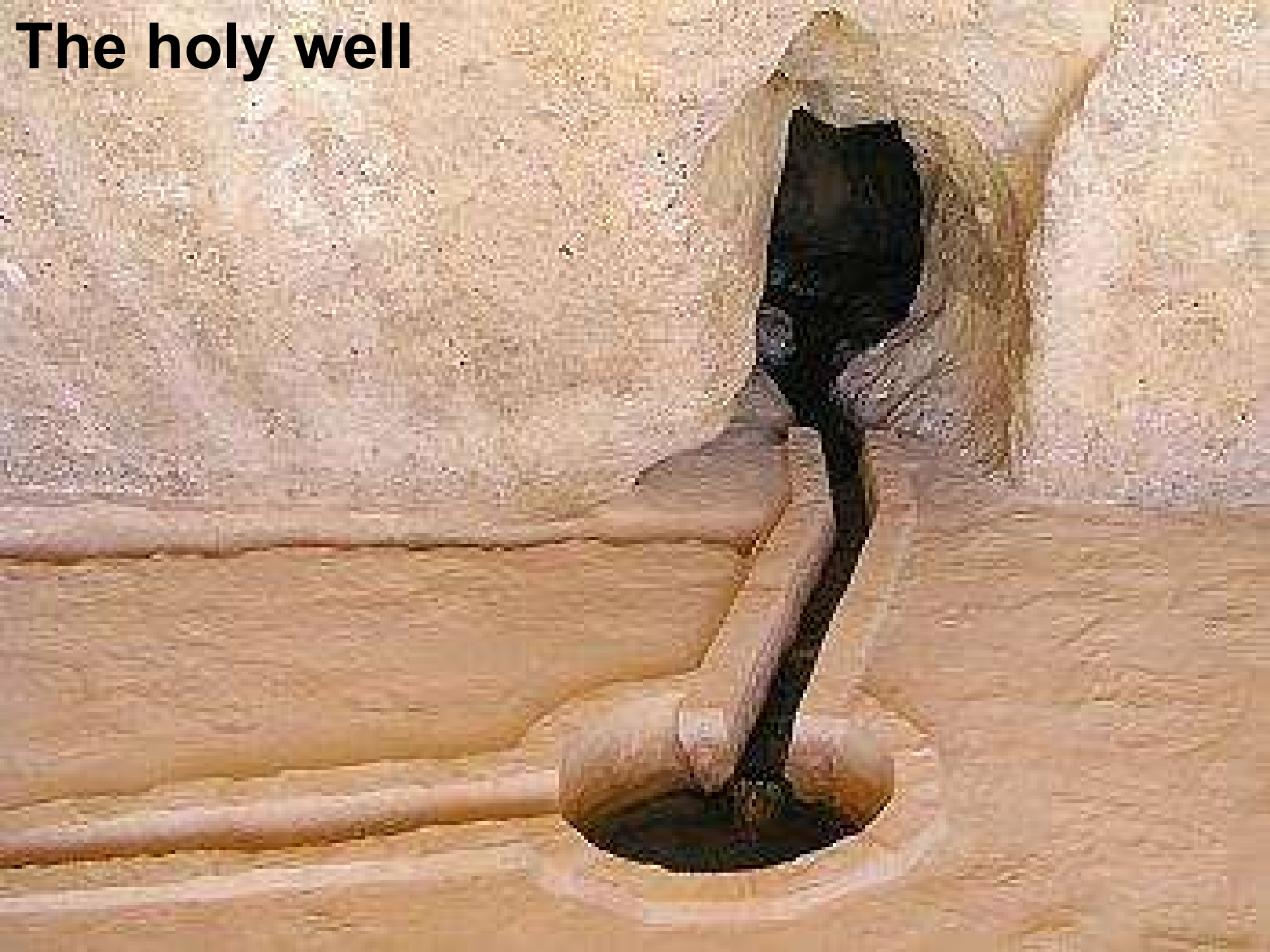


The ancient cells area



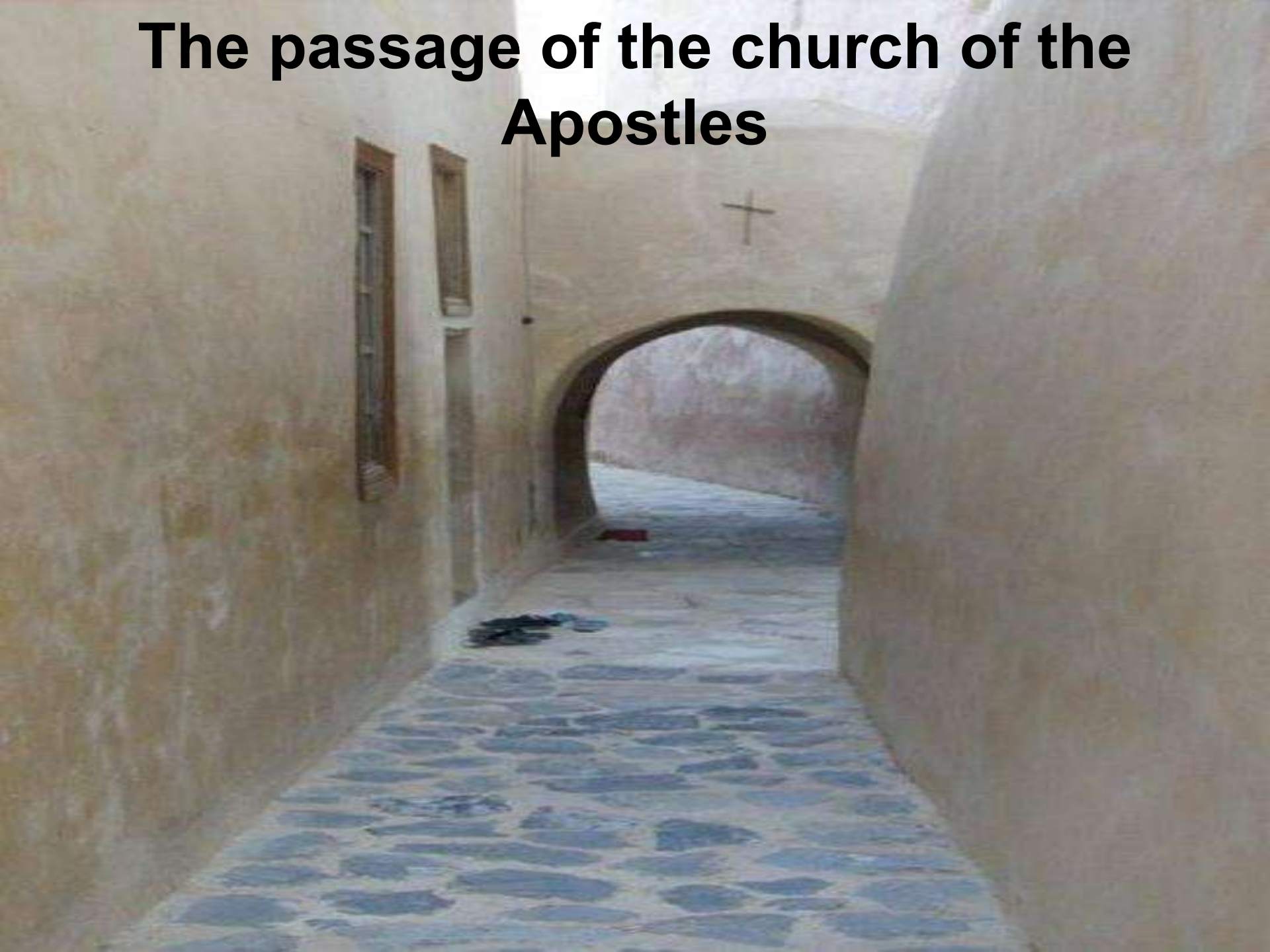
**The old dining room where the monks
sat around a large stone table**





The holy well

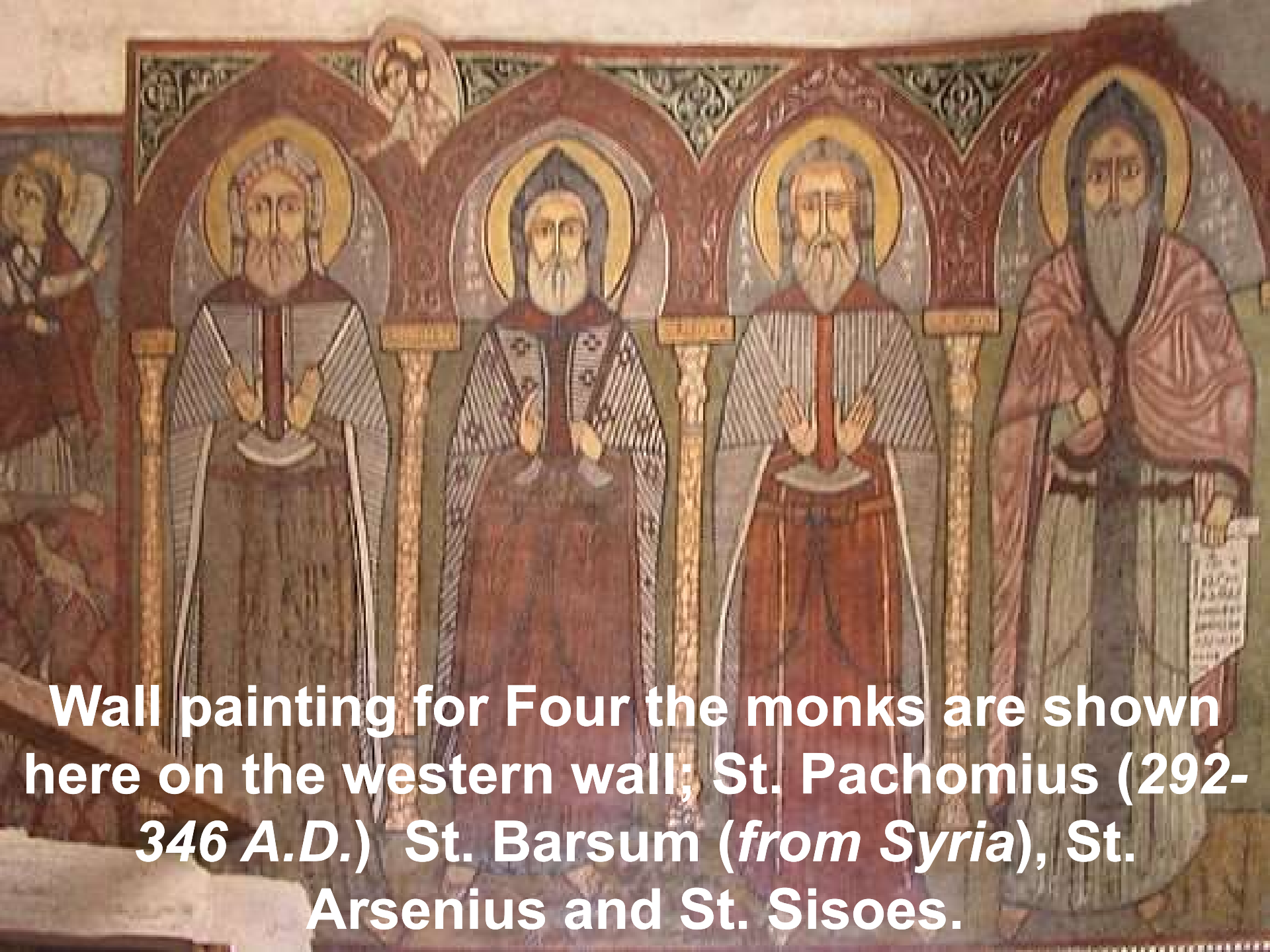
The passage of the church of the Apostles





**Icon of Christ appears in the niche of
the early church**

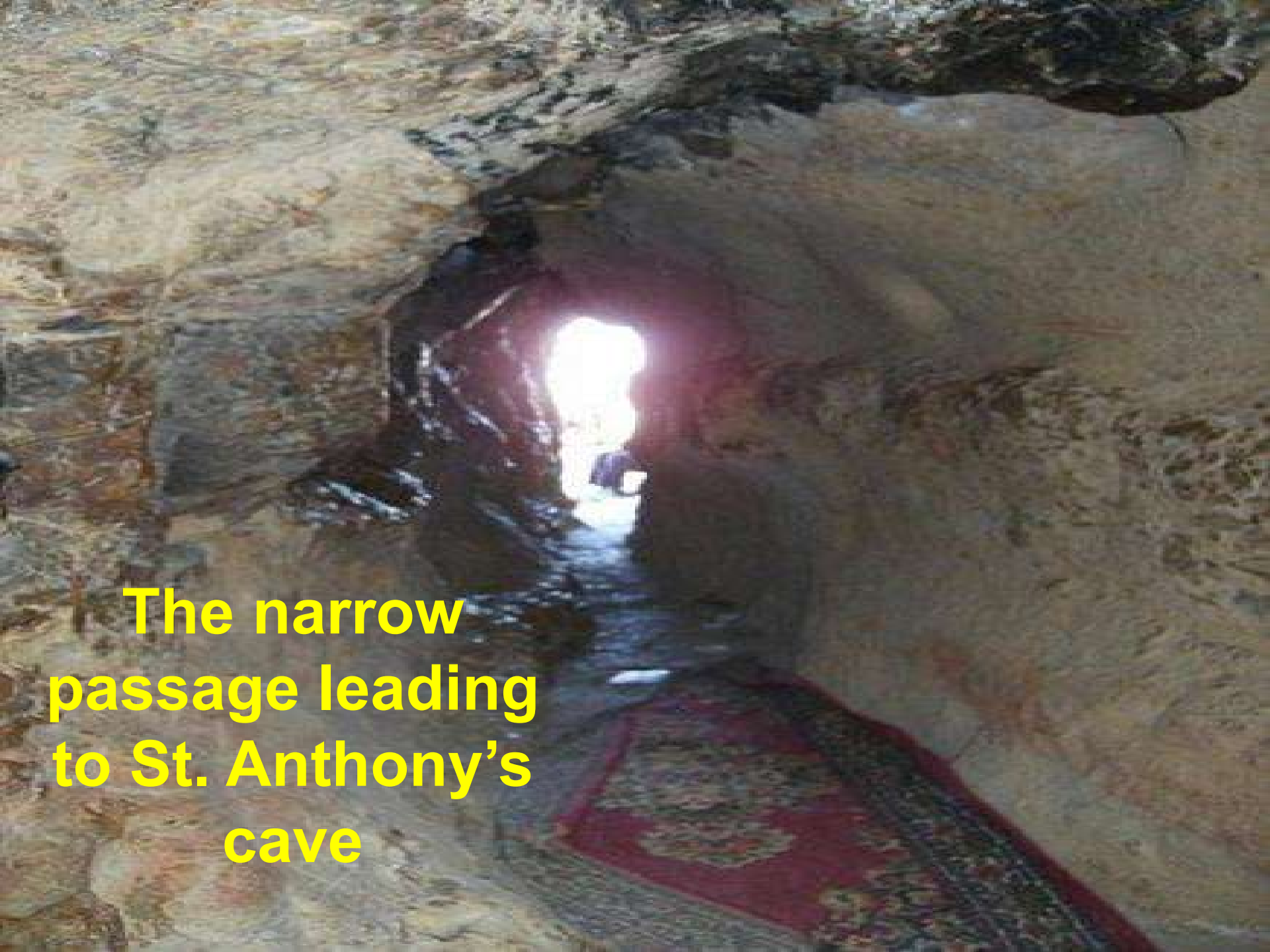




Wall painting for Four the monks are shown here on the western wall; St. Pachomius (292-346 A.D.) St. Barsum (*from Syria*), St. Arsenius and St. Sisoës.

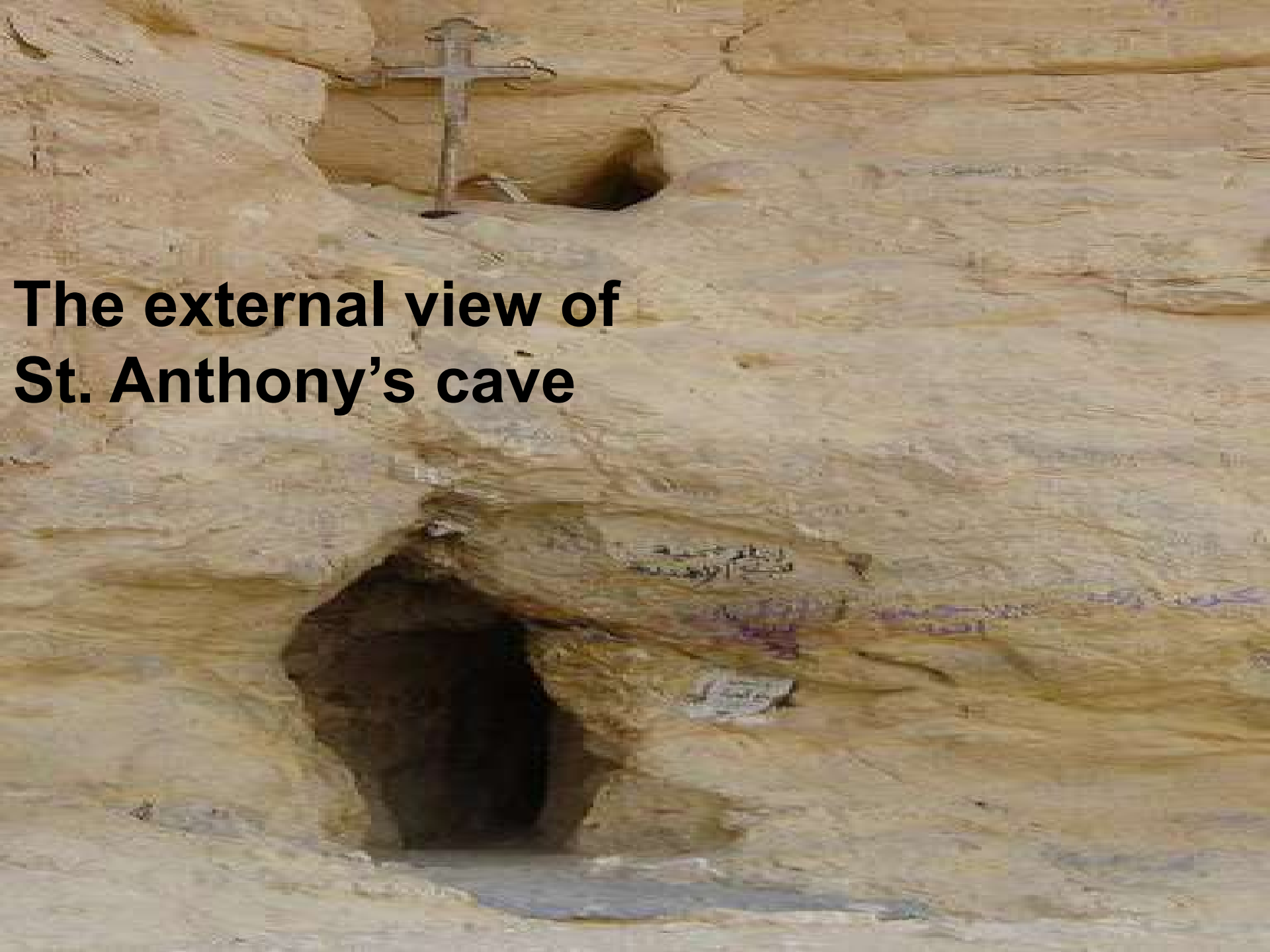
The stairs leading to St. Anthony's cave

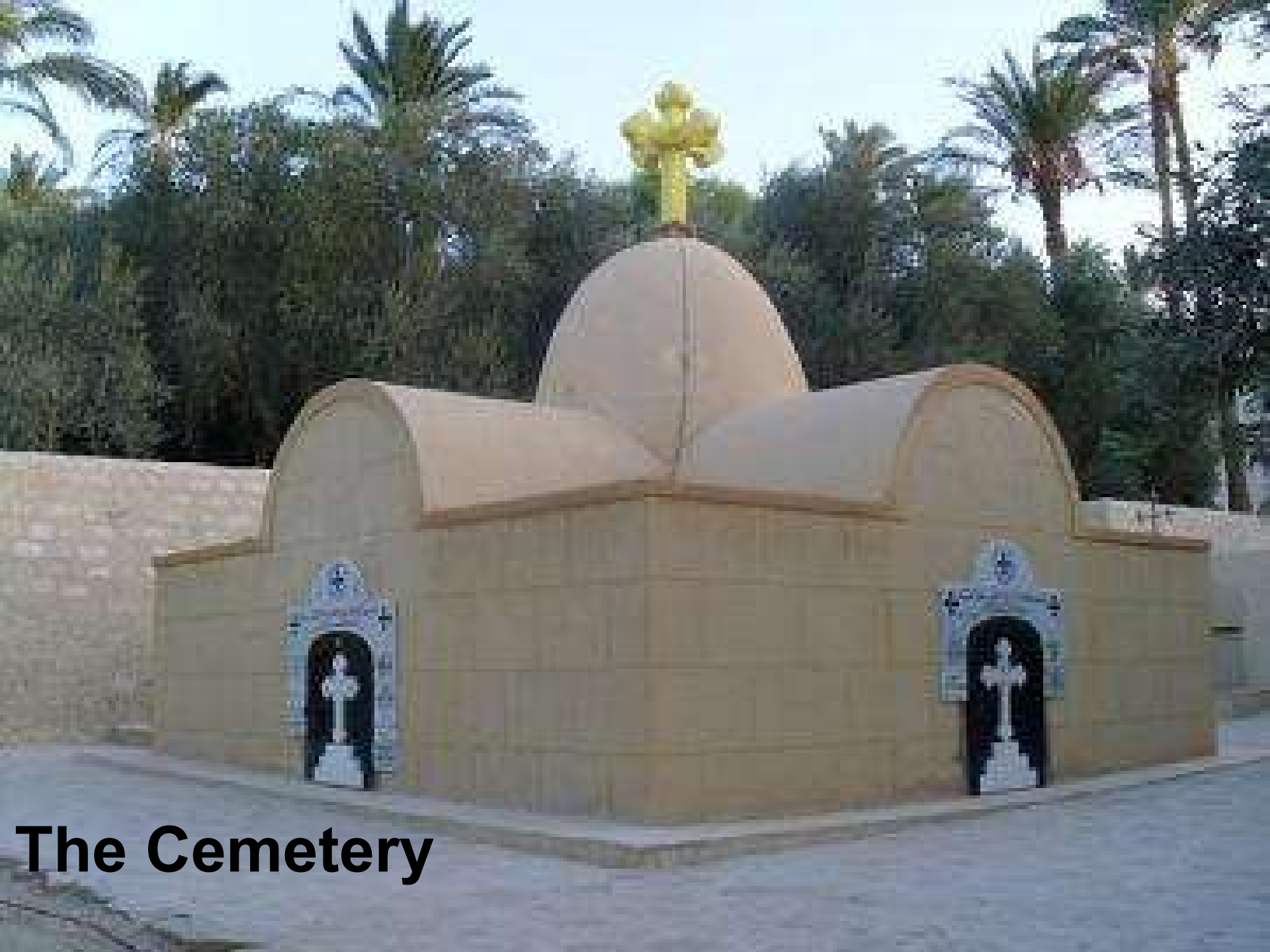




**The narrow
passage leading
to St. Anthony's
cave**

**The external view of
St. Anthony's cave**





The Cemetery



The guest house