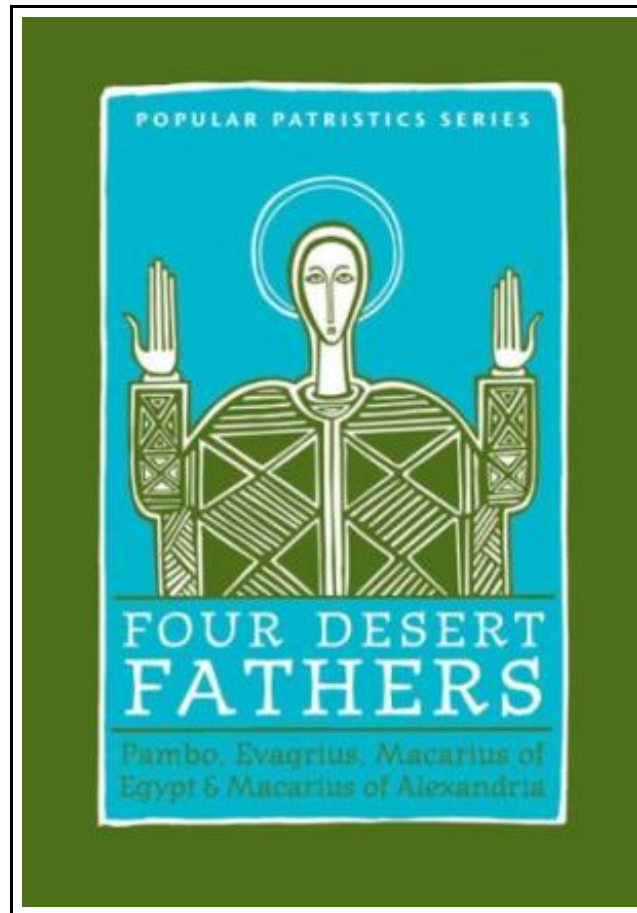


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Reviews

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St. Vladimirs Seminary Press December 2004, 2004. Paper Back. Book Condition: New. This volume, paired with St. Macarius the Spiritbearer, brings the lives and teachings of four Coptic monks to a wider audience than Gabriel Bunge and Adalbert de Vogüé's original, largely academic, French translations from the Coptic Palladiana. Dr. Tim Vivian, a lecturer in Religious Studies at California State-Bakersfield, has translated the Lives of Pambo, Evagrius, Macarius of Egypt (also known as Macarius the Great) and Macarius of Alexandria from the French as well as the Sayings, the Virtues, and a later Life of St. Macarius of Scetis (Macarius the Great). Monks of the fifth century, these four lived in the monastic communities of Lower Egypt (called Wadi al-Natrun) primarily as eremitic ascetics. Ah, but not entirely, else we would never know their names or be privy to their sometimes humorous, invariably sagacious manner of life in the Holy Spirit. Miraculous tales (Macarius of Egypt once healed three newborn antelope calves and a hyena cub) are woven with pragmatic counsel worth committing to heart. After instructing a brother to alternately abuse and praise the dead, one of the fathers counsels, "If you wish to be saved, go, be dead, take no account of people's scorn or their compliments, like the dead themselves, and you can be saved." Other encounters contain the poem's power to enliven with a single image: "Abba Macarius dismissed the congregation from Scetis and said to the brothers, 'Flee, brothers.' An old man said to him, 'Where shall we flee beyond this desert?' He placed his finger on his mouth and said, 'This is flight.'"

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