

PHILIP ROUSSEAU

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# PACHOMIUS

The Making of a Community  
in Fourth-Century Egypt

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# THE DAY'S ROUTINE

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Having seen the communities formed, we need now to understand how, and according to what principles, the daily life of a monk was organized and controlled. This chapter and the two following should be taken together as an attempt to meet that need. Here we shall limit ourselves to a description of the basic timetable. Then we shall assess in Chapter V just how rigidly imposed the monastic order was, and how conformity was conceived and enforced. Finally, in Chapter VI we shall ask who was responsible for that achievement, and how they acquired and retained their positions of authority. In a sense we shall be reaching inward, from the visible practices of asceticism to the more structural and theoretical elements that inspired and maintained those practices. This may make for some repetition as we review different levels of the same accounts, but by the end of the analysis an integrated impression should be formed.

So how, within those new communities, did Pachomian monks conduct themselves? Were not their days, according to the commonest tradition, dominated by rule and firm government? The impression of order, complexity, and strict designation of role is derived most from later elements in the *Rules* and (most misleadingly) in the *Lausiac History* of Palladius. Our caution should by now be well rehearsed. Such texts offer no immediate guide to the practice of Pachomius's day, and may obscure from us the true feel of daily life in one of his monasteries.<sup>1</sup> We

1. A. H. M. Jones is not exceptional; he refers to "a communal life under strict discipline," involving "gangs," "foremen," and "highly organized industrial and agricultural concerns," *Later Roman Empire*, 2:929. His references, Chapter 22 n. 156, p. 1388, are mainly to Palladius. Ludicrously unjust to Pachomius is E. Amand de Mendieta, "Le Système cénobitique basilien comparé au système cénobitique pachômien," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 152 (1957): 31-80. He deals, in the case of Pachomius, with a "système encore primitif, presque em-

need to recall not only the primitive customs but also what contemporaries regarded as essential to their community experience. When Theodore looked back on his younger days, he remembered chiefly the joy and peace that the monks preserved for one another. They had nothing but the word of God in their hearts and on their lips: "We were not conscious of living on earth but of feasting in heaven."<sup>2</sup> Reading the *Rules*, one might hardly have guessed it!

Yet the essentials can be discovered as Pachomius first defined them. They are easy enough to extract from early levels in the sources at our disposal. "They lived," as the *Vita Prima* puts it, "a coenobitic life. So he established for them in a rule an irreproachable lifestyle and traditions profitable for their souls. These he took from the holy Scriptures: proper measure in clothing, equality in food, and decent sleeping arrangements."<sup>3</sup> That early formulary brings us much closer to the central and enduring spirit of Pachomius's community.

Day began with the monks in their cells. There they had slept or kept a vigil propped up on special seats<sup>4</sup> since the end of the previous

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bryonnaire et, à certains égards, monstrueux," p. 34. No serious comparison is attempted. On the central issues of love, the Bible, the supremacy of the cenobitic life, pp. 43f, Pachomius is not even mentioned; much the same is true when he writes of the relations between monasticism and the church, pp. 65f. Fuller reference to such notions, and necessary criticism, is provided by Ruppert, pp. 265f. Ruppert's work is indispensable to an understanding of order and authority in the lifetime of Pachomius. The required balance is also provided by, for example, W. Bousset, *Apophthegmata*, in the fourth and fifth chapters of his section on Pachomius (somewhat neglected by scholars), pp. 236–47; by Chitty, *Desert*, Chapter 2, "The Institution," pp. 20–28 (which would be a useful companion to this chapter); by P. Deseille, *L'Esprit du monachisme pachômien*, especially pp. xxxixf; and by A. de Vogüé, in his foreword to Veilleux, *Koinonia*, 1: vii–xxiii. One might note also at this point the material data provided by C. C. Walters, *Monastic Archaeology in Egypt*, esp. pp. 205f, on food, clothing, and artifacts. Little work has been done on Pachomian sites. *Miscellanea Coptica*, presented by Hjalmar Torp and others, is mainly iconographical and focused on the monastery of Apa Jeremias at Saqqara, but it contains useful comparative material and a good bibliography to augment references to Lower Egypt in my *Ascetics*. On clothing, see also G. Castel, "Étude d'une momie copte," *Hommages à la mémoire de Serge Sauneron*, 2: 121–43 and plates.

2. G<sup>1</sup> 131. Bo is missing. There is no exact equivalent in S<sup>6</sup>, but see the S<sup>3</sup> text used by Veilleux, *Koinonia*, vol. 1, for Bo 104. Athanasius, *Festal Letter* 14, voices the same sentiment: "for thus also the saints all their lives long, were like men rejoicing at a feast" (Eng. trans., p. 111).

3. G<sup>1</sup> 25, but for "irreproachable" (ἀπρόσκοπον) I would prefer "not calculated to cause offense." The allusion to scripture at such an "original" moment will prove important.

4. G<sup>1</sup> 79, P 87–88, based on Pachomius's own early practice (G<sup>1</sup> 14): "for a

evening's prayer.<sup>5</sup> In the early days they would have had a cell each,<sup>6</sup> no one was allowed to visit the cell of another without permission.<sup>7</sup> This degree of privacy was an important feature of Pachomian monasticism. Although the door could not be locked, there was always this one place where a monk could reflect without distraction. The cells were arranged in "houses," with twenty monks or more to a house.<sup>8</sup> What distinguished one house from another is not entirely clear. In some communities, or at certain periods, all who possessed one skill or exercised one responsibility may have lived together; but this could have been the case only when a wide variety of activities took place within each monastery, which was a later development, as we shall see.<sup>9</sup> Much of a monk's religious life revolved around his house, and its superior, the *οἰκιακός* or *praepositus*, was probably the most important man in his life.<sup>10</sup>

long time whenever he wanted to refresh his body with sleep after growing weary in keeping awake for prayer, he would simply sit on something in the middle of the place without leaning his back against the wall." These *καθισμάτια*, attested also by Cassian and Palladius, had a reclining back designed to make lengthy sleep unlikely; the sick and the elderly were probably dispensed from their use.

5. P 126, PLeg 2. For evening prayer, see below.

6. Ladeuze, *Cénobitisme pachômien*, pp. 263, 275f, questioning the accuracy of Palladius, HL 32.2, which has three in a cell. Chitty, *Desert*, Chapter 2 n. 26, p. 39, gives several references, not all of which are precise about numbers or quite to the point.

7. G<sup>1</sup> 59, not in Bo. The same applied to visiting other houses, P 112, PLeg 7 (although P 89 is more lenient). The cells were strong enough for a monk to sleep on the roof, P 87. The phrase in G<sup>1</sup> 76, *ἐκοιμάτο ἔσω εἰς τὰς καλύβας*, refers to huts built at harvest time (see also G<sup>1</sup> 51); this is probably what G<sup>1</sup> 77 refers to, with the phrase *εἰς τὰς σκηναὶς αὐτῶν* ("probably a blunder," Veilleux, *Koinonia*, 1:416), as also *τὰ σκηνώματα* in G<sup>1</sup> 126.

8. Jerome suggested forty, disputed effectively by Ladeuze, *Cénobitisme pachômien*, pp. 274f. Three or four houses constituted a "tribe" according to Jerome's gloss at P 15 (see Veilleux, *Koinonia*, 2:184 n. 9), but Ruppert doubts the accuracy of the reference, pp. 300f.

9. G<sup>1</sup> 28 might mean that each house performed a different task. The references, ostensibly to specialized houses, supplied by Chitty, *Desert*, Chapter 2 n. 31, p. 40, refer only to the sick and the preparation of food; but note the more favorable opinion of Ruppert, pp. 297f. Palladius thought different houses catered for different standards of monk, HL 32.4. This may have been a confusion on his part; the notion persisted in Dion. 25. On the slowness of development in this regard, see Veilleux, *Liturgie*, p. 130.

10. There is confusion in the terminology of G<sup>1</sup> 28. We begin tidily with an *οἰκονόμος* and a *δεύτερος* for the monastery, and an *οἰκιακός* and a *δεύτερος* for each house; the *οἰκονόμος* delivers the weekend catechesis proper to the superior of the monastery (see below). But then we have *οἰκονόμοι* in the houses, and the writer attempts clarity at the end with phrases like *μεγάλος οἰκονόμος*,

Around dawn<sup>11</sup> the monks would hear a horn or gong<sup>12</sup> calling them to morning prayer. This was the *synaxis* or *collecta*, which brought together in one place all members of the community. They would file in to occupy their strictly allotted places.<sup>13</sup> The regular morning prayer consisted of extensive readings from scripture, followed at intervals by common recitation of the Our Father, and periods of silent reflection. Only on Sundays and other days when the Eucharist was celebrated was there any particular emphasis on psalms or singing. During the *synaxis* (presumably during the periods of scripture reading) the monks were expected to work quietly,<sup>14</sup> and it was during the *synaxis* that penance was performed for various faults against the rule.<sup>15</sup>

This type of monastic liturgy was different from that practiced elsewhere in Egypt, and not perhaps what we in the Latin West would expect, given the development of the monastic office as we know it since Benedict, with its heavy emphasis on the singing of the psalter. The opportunity to reflect and pray in silence, though still in a communal setting, seems a particularly well conceived stipulation, and the stimulus to that prayer and reflection was always a varied reading of the Bible. It made Pachomian practice less a contrast, perhaps, to the normal liturgical experience of the Christian layman.<sup>16</sup> It also made the act of commu-

and *πατήρ τῆς μονῆς*. Veilleux is less worried, *Koinonia*, 1:410. Ruppert, pp. 282f, 290f, shows how difficult it is to plot a progression in the vocabulary of leadership—which would tell us little about role in any case. He emphasizes, p. 291, how remote the superior might seem, at “house level”; and see p. 321. Just how much authority *praepositi* enjoyed will be discussed in the two following chapters. Other *praepositi* could stand in for one absent, *P* 115.

11. I follow Veilleux, *Liturgie*, pp. 299f. For Cornelios’s practice at Thmoušons, see *G*<sup>1</sup> 60f; *Bo* 59 is slightly less explicit.

12. The horn may be Jerome’s error in *P* 3; but it recurs in *P* 9, which is echoed (independently?) by *σάλπιγξ* in the *Excerpta*, *Boon*, p. 171. The gong is mentioned in *G*<sup>1</sup> 61 (as also for meals, *G*<sup>1</sup> 52). *P* 23 suggests that such signals were made by the superior of the monastery.

13. *P* 1, 4.

14. *P* 4, 5. The opening of 5 could mean that this practice was restricted to the evening prayer in the house; this seems unlikely.

15. *G*<sup>1</sup> 70, *Bo* 65; *P* 131 (although *P* 8, 135, *PInst* 6, 8 imply penance during meals). Jerome links the practice with the catechesis, *Ep.* 22.35, but this section of the letter is confused in several ways. *Bo* 87, however, makes the same connection, only under Theodore, and with no counterpart in *G*<sup>1</sup>. On both morning and evening prayer, a useful English summary based largely on the views of Veilleux, together with other interesting information, is provided by R. Taft, “Praise in the Desert,” *Worship* 56 (1982): 513–36. My thanks to Eugene O’Sullivan for this reference.

16. See *G*<sup>1</sup> 29, *Bo* 25. Pachomius’s links with church and society will be explored in Chapter VIII.

nal prayer more closely associated with the rest of the monastic day, during which the recitation of scripture and reflection upon it played a continuous part. Formal evening prayer and instruction by superiors we shall refer to in a moment, but monks would also recite texts while they worked (an activity described as *meditatio*).<sup>17</sup> They were constantly encouraged to discuss among themselves the reflections on scripture offered by their superiors,<sup>18</sup> and as they moved from one duty to another in the monastery, they turned over texts of scripture in their heads.<sup>19</sup>

This heavy emphasis on the recitation of texts points also to the use of books. All monks were expected to be lettered, and to learn at least some of the psalter and the New Testament.<sup>20</sup> Pachomius warned them against "the splendor and the beauty" of books, which could be "outwardly pleasing to the eye," but this was not so much an attack on ideas as an emphasis on a book's true worth—the contents rather than the appearance.<sup>21</sup> Books, like much other monastic property, were guarded very carefully by the *praepositus* of each house,<sup>22</sup> but they could be borrowed with permission for a week at a time.<sup>23</sup>

After morning prayer, monks returned to their cells to await instructions about the day's work.<sup>24</sup> One of the house *praepositi* would go to the superior of the monastery (this might not have been necessary every day) to inquire what work was to be done; he would then go around the various houses to see what fresh equipment or material they might need.<sup>25</sup> This was one of the responsibilities of the *hebdomadarius*. The houses took it in turns to organize the work in this way, as also to con-

17. P 36–37. The "simul meditabuntur" of P 116 might suggest recitation aloud, but the context demands silence; see also G<sup>1</sup> 89. In P 60, however, "aut . . . aut . . ." makes the activity seem an alternative to silence.

18. P 138; see 122, and G<sup>1</sup> 125. The point will recur when we discuss the evening timetable.

19. P 28, 59; G<sup>1</sup> 61, 88; Bo 34, 66, 99. On the central role of scripture, see Ruppert, pp. 128f.

20. P 139–40.

21. G<sup>1</sup> 63, not in Bo. The caution is directed also against food and clothing. It is tempting to raise the specter of possible anti-intellectualism in Pachomius and his associates; but there is little early evidence for later preoccupations, for example with the works of Origen, as reflected in Dion. 44, with parallels in G<sup>2</sup> 68 and *Paral.* 4 (7). G<sup>1</sup> 31 also attacks Origen, but again has no parallel in Bo.

22. G<sup>1</sup> 59. Other instances concern especially clothing: see P 66, *PLeg* 15.

23. P 25. Jerome in P 101 says books were counted every night, but this is not supported by the Coptic text. See also P 100. However, books were clearly popular: see *PInst* 2, 7, and note P 82.

24. P 19, 24.

25. P 24. See P 12, 111, 124, and Veilleux, *Liturgie*, p. 127. P 26 suggests that some such inquiry might have been conducted the previous evening.

duct certain parts of the liturgy (especially on Sundays), and to prepare meals and serve at table. They did this a week at a time, and were excused meanwhile from certain other duties.<sup>26</sup> It is worth noting that, in the early days, Pachomius made this arrangement precisely so that no one should become wedded to a particular routine, or over-identified with a particular skill, but should be ready to turn his hand to anything as the well-being of the community might require.<sup>27</sup>

Once the day's work had been planned and tools and material had been distributed, the monks in each house lined up to be led away to their place of work by their *praepositi*.<sup>28</sup> At such a moment we might most clearly picture them, wearing simple belted tunics, their arms bare, a goatskin and hood thrown over their shoulders (each hood bearing the sign of both monastery and house), rough boots for the working day, and perhaps a staff.<sup>29</sup> Only those engaged in the weaving of baskets, mats, or ropes would remain in the living quarters. The lining up and leading off seems regimental; it also hints at a diversity of labor. It brings to mind the most famous description of the Pachomian workforce (and also the most enduring in the Christian memory), recorded by Palladius in his *Lausiac History*. He suggests that the monks engaged in every sort of handicraft. Referring to Panopolis (without specifying which community), he mentions tailors, metalworkers, carpenters, cameldrivers, and fullers.<sup>30</sup> In another passage he writes more generally of husbandmen, gardeners, smiths, bakers, fullers, basketmakers, shoemakers, and copyists.<sup>31</sup> Here no numbers are mentioned; but in the earlier passage he makes it clear that, of a community of about three hundred, he is discussing only fifty-three men, more than half of whom are concerned with clothing.

More primitive texts do suggest, however, a certain amount of specialization, particularly in agriculture. The *villa* of the monastery, mean-

26. P 15; see G<sup>1</sup> 77, 125.

27. G<sup>1</sup> 28, although contradictions will be examined.

28. P 58, and perhaps 130, although Ruppert, p. 285, must qualify Veil-leux, *Koinonia*, 2:191f: the words here, *ducem/ἡγούμενον*, refer probably to no one more exalted than the monk who was deputed to head the line. There will be further discussion of how and where the monks did their work in Chapter VIII, esp. at nn. 24f.

29. See Jerome's preface to the *Rules*, 4, and P 2, 81, 99. They also wore a mantle at night and during the *synaxis*, P 61. For laundry (weekly), see P 67f. It was as the monks went off to work that Theodore's mother watched them, Bo 37. Compare the information provided by Castel (n. 1 above).

30. HL 32.9.

31. Ibid. 12. The last-mentioned reminds us of the Nag Hammadi codices. See also the list of tasks in Am, pp. 377f.

ing in this case the stable area, was open only to people with relevant skills, herdsmen and plowmen especially.<sup>32</sup> Another closed shop, so to speak, was the bakery.<sup>33</sup> We have mentioned already an early passage in the *Vita Prima* that could suggest houses were at first distinguished by the tasks they performed: serving at table, cooking meals, caring for the sick, receiving guests, collecting material for work, and selling the produce of the monastery. But these denote services rather than skills; and the reference has to be coupled with the system of weekly rotation, and with the statement in that same chapter that monks were not to set their hearts upon any one type of activity, but hold themselves ready to obey whatever orders might be given them.<sup>34</sup>

Most primitive references to work in the Pachomian sources are concerned with basket making and the weaving of ropes and mats, together with the collection of materials necessary for the work and the marketing of the produce in nearby towns.<sup>35</sup> It is even suggested in one instance that the *praepositus* of each house should provide his monks with model baskets to copy!<sup>36</sup> The mention of expeditions for the collection of rushes is particularly frequent. These may have been quite prolonged forays, with camping out in temporary shelters; that they stood out in people's memories may be proven by the anecdotes that cluster around them in the texts. It was while cutting rushes, for example, that Pachomius received the vision of the angel at Tabennesi.<sup>37</sup>

The enthusiastic and surely rather distracting diversity described by Palladius seems to have been a later development. There are signs that shortly after Pachomius's death controversy arose as to whether the simple economy of basket making and marketing should not give way to

32. P 108. The Coptic is more specific about *villa*, referring to "animal stalls"; and there are other variations. The item is omitted in the Greek *Excerpta*.

33. P 117. This was a rowdy venue, if one may trust G<sup>1</sup> 89, 121. The S<sup>5</sup> account, supplied by Veilleux, *Koinonia*, vol. 1, for Bo 138, is even funnier. See the comments of Festugière on this "bavardage à la boulangerie," *Première Vie grecque*, p. 47.

34. G<sup>1</sup> 28. G<sup>1</sup> 84 has a house at Phbow, with its own *οἰκιακός*, entirely responsible for the care of the sick. G<sup>1</sup> 26 may imply that services came before crafts.

35. P 5, 12, 26, 124. P 27 mentions the records kept of manufacture, to be presented at the great federation meeting in August (see Chapter III at n. 100). There is very little reference to marketing in those sections of the *Lives* that refer to Pachomius's lifetime. For information about the federation's boats and their use, see G<sup>1</sup> 113, and Veilleux, *Koinonia*, 1:419. One late text implies that over a two-month period a monk could weave five hundred mats: G<sup>2</sup> 67, Dion. 43.

36. *PLeg* 1. He was also supposed to show them how to eat, P 31. Theodore demonstrated techniques, G<sup>1</sup> 86.

37. G<sup>1</sup> 23. See n. 7, adding G<sup>1</sup> 71, P 80.



something a little more adventurous and profitable. It was on this issue that the monastery at Thmoušons under Apollonius virtually seceded from Pachomius's federation, raising a principle and presenting a difficulty that would preoccupy the government of his immediate successors.<sup>38</sup> The implication has to be that, in spite of the details provided by Palladius (presuming they are accurate), Pachomius himself was not the architect of a complex economic system, as is often suggested, and might have frowned upon the industry for which his followers in later generations apparently became famous.

The work that Pachomius demanded of his monks was "moderatus,"<sup>39</sup> and this consideration is reflected also in regulations about meals. There seem to have been usually two each day: the main meal during the working period and a lighter one in the evening.<sup>40</sup> Again a gong was sounded, and all met to eat together (with their boots off—a pleasing touch).<sup>41</sup> Eating was conducted in complete silence.<sup>42</sup> The meal appears to have consisted of bread and cooked vegetables; but other food may sometimes have been available or tolerated, and the sick were treated, in a place apart, with special consideration.<sup>43</sup> There was also an obscure morsel known as *tragematia* or *κορσενήλιον*, perhaps a dessert of dried

38. G<sup>1</sup> 127. The dispute concerned much more than economy, and called into question the whole structure of the federation, the style of Pachomius's leadership, and his assumptions about the succession. The events will be discussed more fully in Chapters VIII and IX. The other monasteries were subject at first to supply and control from Phbow, G<sup>1</sup> 83.

39. *PLeg* 3. *PLeg* 11, and perhaps *P* 10, imply consideration for a monk weary with work: see n. 46 below.

40. Veilleux, *Liturgie*, p. 306. For the midday meal, see *P* 103.

41. G<sup>1</sup> 52. Boots would be handed in after work, along with other tools, but they were removed even for lunch in the fields, *P* 65, 102. The influence of the house persisted at mealtime: no one should start eating before his *praepositus*, *P* 30.

42. *P* 30, corroborated by Jerome, *Ep* 22. 35; *HM* (Latin) 3; Cassian, *Institutes* 4.17; and Palladius, *HL* 32.6. It is interesting that the supposed canons of Athanasius should include (67), "None among them shall talk while they eat, nor shall they, while they eat, raise their faces one toward another"—referring here to the expected conduct of priests in their bishop's household! See W. Riedel and W. E. Crum, *The Canons of Athanasius of Alexandria*, and note, for Pachomius, pp. xviii–xxii.

43. G<sup>1</sup> 53, 69. Palladius, *HL* 32.11, mentions also cheese and olives. G<sup>1</sup> 55 and *Am*, pp. 376f may prove that such delicacies were available, although it is not clear that such was true of Thmoušons itself, to which the anecdote refers, but rather of what might come one's way while traveling, which is what Pachomius and his companions were doing here. Dried fruit is mentioned in G<sup>1</sup> 97 and *P* 75–77. See more generally *P* 71, 73, 80. *Paral.* 8 (15f) may provide reliable and similar information about fourth-century practice. Does G<sup>1</sup> 79 suggest that absti-

fruit, which was distributed to the monks after the evening meal. Palladius mentions meals in the houses, which was not the Pachomian practice, but he may have been thinking of the *tragematia*, which were intended for eating in the house and were supposed to last three days.<sup>44</sup>

The evening timetable is difficult to reconstruct. In addition to the meal, there was a period of instruction and brief community prayer; prayers were also conducted in each house before the monks retired for the night. A chapter in the *Vita Prima* provides us with a probably reliable outline: after the meal, Pachomius delivered his catechesis; there was a short prayer; the monks withdrew to their houses, repeating by heart passages from scripture; they then recited together, in the house, what were known as the "six prayers"; and these were followed by a discussion of the catechesis.<sup>45</sup> We know from other passages, both in the *Lives* and in the *Rules*, that the superior of each monastery delivered his catechesis normally only on Saturdays and Sundays (on Sundays twice). On Wednesdays and Fridays, which were fast days, a catechesis was delivered in the house by the *praepositus*. On these occasions, presumably there was no community meal in the evening and the monks went straight from work to their houses.<sup>46</sup> Discussion of the catechesis seems always to have taken place in the house, and particular emphasis was placed on the need to discuss the catechesis of the *praepositus*—partly no doubt because this was inevitably a more intimate occasion, and partly perhaps because his lesser authority invited a greater degree of inquiry and debate.<sup>47</sup> As for the "six prayers," a certain confusion and obscurity

nence from wine was exceptional? On the treatment of the sick (granted soup, fish, and perhaps even meat), see G<sup>1</sup> 53, 64. Palladius also says that the monks kept pigs to eat their scraps, *HL* 32.10.

44. *HL* 32.2. Some may have been allowed to stay away from the common meal and eat more sparingly in the house under the supervision of the *praepositus*, *P* 79, but this would have been a temporary arrangement. For moderation in fasting, which will emerge in several anecdotes, see Ruppert, pp. 91f. Note also *P* 37f, G<sup>1</sup> 111 (not in Bo). *P* 28 is odd: it suggests a meal after the *collecta*. Could the tradition behind *P* 32 explain this? The corresponding item in the Greek *Excerpta*, XXXII, Boon, p. 173, has the phrase ὑστερίζων τῆς εὐχῆς τοῦ φαγεῖν, which must mean being late for the *grace*, before the meal.

45. G<sup>1</sup> 58. G<sup>1</sup> 77 is similar, referring to Theodore's catechetical *début*—probably an evening occasion, since the outraged returned to their cells. For similar practices in other settings, see my *Ascetics*, p. 41.

46. G<sup>1</sup> 28, Bo 26; *Plnst* 15. "Disputatio" in *P* 20 refers to the same activity. On coming straight from work, see *PLeg* 11. The evening catechesis was regarded as very important: one might be absent only "gravissima necessitate," *PLeg* 12, and see *P* 22.

47. *P* 122. The Coptic version does not reproduce the phrase "vicissim inter se," but then *P* 138 is emphatic on the point; and see *P* 19. Compare the

persists.<sup>48</sup> It seems reasonably certain that they were a minor version of the morning *synaxis*,<sup>49</sup> but given the fact that they were going to be followed by a discussion among the twenty or so monks present, there was probably less emphasis on periods of personal reflection.

This sequence of instruction, recitation, and above all discussion among those most closely known to one another may contrast with what can spring to mind when one thinks of monastic liturgy, even in its early days. Here was a real opportunity for growth in understanding, and one that would help a monk to relate what he heard to his immediate needs and circumstance. The individual's knowledge of himself in the light of scripture, fostered within a small and stable group: that was the hoped-for effect of the Pachomian day. Inner levels of the experience we shall examine in later chapters. At the practical level, it was a pattern of activity that flowed naturally into the more solitary reflections of a watchful night.<sup>50</sup>

custom at Latopolis, G<sup>1</sup> 34. Jerome also mentions these discussions, *Ep.* 22.35. It is in this light that one should judge the hesitation of Ruppert, pp. 351f.

48. Veilleux has discussed the problems exhaustively, *Liturgie*, pp. 295f.

49. *PInst* 14, *PLeg* 10; see Veilleux, *loc. cit.* (n. 48) and pp. 121f.

50. There was no formal night prayer. Reference to such an occasion is restricted to the *Paralipomena*, which do not reflect Pachomian practice: see Veilleux, *Liturgie*, p. 24 n. 29, and pp. 302–5. Pachomius himself at times kept vigil, G<sup>1</sup> 22; G<sup>1</sup> 60f, Bo 59; G<sup>1</sup> 88, Bo 73. But these seem always to have been exceptional events.