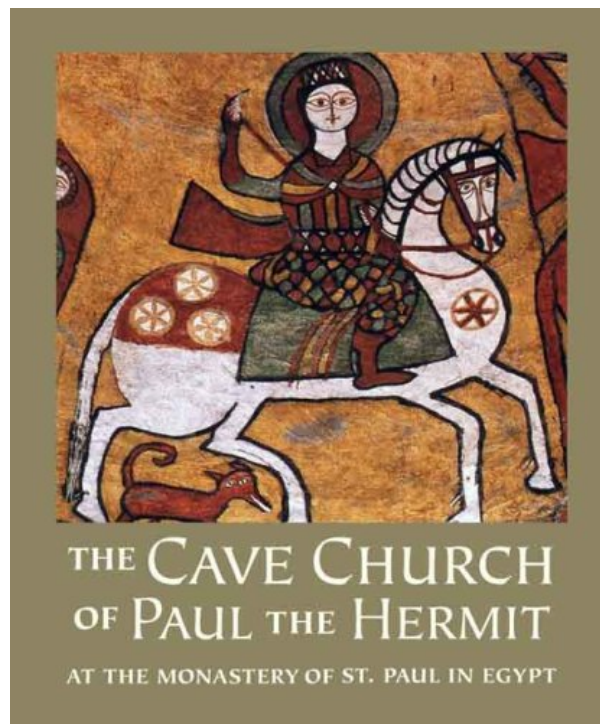


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The Coptic Monastery of St. Paul by the Red Sea grew up around the cave where Paul, the first Christian hermit, lived in solitude. The cave served as a shrine in late antiquity, became a church in the middle ages, and expanded again in the early modern period.

This visually and intellectually exciting book chronicles the history of a series of devotional paintings in the Cave Church. It explores how the monastic community commissioned painting twice in the church in the 13th century, during one of the greatest eras of Coptic art, and how one of the monks painted it again in the 18th century, helping to inaugurate a Coptic renaissance after centuries of decline.

The foundation of this volume is a wall painting conservation project sponsored by the American Research Center in Egypt. The book also sets the art and architecture of the Cave Church in its historical context and examines the role of the Monastery of St. Paul as part of the sacred geography of Christian Egypt through time.

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About the Author

William Lyster is an independent scholar based in Cairo.

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a handsome, unique book

By Ken D.

So I saw this pricey book at a nice bookshop last year and fell in love with it. Decided to try for a lower price through Amazon. Easily done and received.

Without going into great detail I'll just say that it is quite gorgeous with large photos on virtually every leaf of this 393 page folio book. The photos are of course of the 18th century paintings in this fabulous Egyptian monastery (well represented on the cover). The paintings have a style much embedded in the medieval tradition with a wonderfully "crude" Coptic folk flavor. Plenty of visual comparisons with other Coptic

works are offered to the reader as well. The book is comprehensively researched over a period of several years with a kind of intimate, enthusiastic, competent scholarship. It includes very involved indices that most readers, including me, won't spend much time in---but if one ever wants to chase down more of the same this will certainly guide the pilgrim where he wants to go. Published according to the high standards of Yale Univ. Press. If you purchase the book you won't be disappointed. Short of living in this splendidly ornate monastery occasional leisurely moments in this book is the next best thing.

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