

This is an extract from:

Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents:

A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments

edited by John Thomas and Angela Constantinides Hero

with the assistance of Giles Constable

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2. *Pantelleria: Typikon* of John for the Monastery of St. John the Forerunner on Pantelleria

Date: probably late 8th c.¹

Translator: Gianfranco Fiaccadori

Edition employed: Ivan D. Mansvetov, *Tserkovnii ustav (tipik), ego obrazovanie i sudba v grečeskoj i russkoj tserkvi* (Moscow, 1885), pp. 441–45; cf. Ivan Dujčev, “Il Tipico del monastero di S. Giovanni nell’isola di Pantelleria,” *BBGG*, n.s., 25 (1971), 3–17, with untranscribed facsimile of the Bodleian manuscript at 5–12.

Manuscripts: Ms. Russian State Library (Moscow), formerly Theological Academy 54, fols. 91v ff. (16th–17th c.). There are two other manuscripts: State Historical Museum (Moscow), formerly Patriarchal Library, Undol’skij Collection, 110 of the Synodal Checklist, fols. 549 ff. (16th–17th c.), and Bodleian Library (Oxford), 995–92, fols. 124r–127v (16th–17th c.).

Other translations: Italian, by Dujčev, “Riflessi,” pp. 208–12, and “Il Tipico,” pp. 13–17, from the Bodleian manuscript.

Institutional History

Very little is known about this foundation, and not much can be said with certainty even about such basic matters as when its founder John lived, how long his monastery was in existence, and when it disappeared. In addition to the present *typikon*, the founder is also known from his appearance in various *synaxaria* of the Greek church, in which he is customarily described as “confessor” as well as superior of this monastery on Pantelleria.² This has led some scholars to speculate that he may have been a refugee from Iconoclasm, and that his monastery must therefore date from some time after 726.³ John’s successor, Basil, was also commemorated as a saint, and a canon dedicated to him is extant that appears to refer to John’s monastic rules.⁴ The canon features the hard ascetic life conducted by Basil, which appears consonant with the stern tenor of John’s *typikon* (see below). The canon obviously must be later than the *typikon*, but since its own dating is speculative, it is no help in dating the latter document.

A few facts known about the island of Pantelleria itself hint at the likely duration and ultimate fate of the foundation. Located southwest of the westernmost tip of Sicily and due east of Tunisia, as an Italian possession it is even today a remote and sparsely populated site. Known in classical times as Cossyra, it became known as Patellaria circa 700,⁵ that is about the time Arab rule became firmly established in Ifriqiya on the nearby African coast with the fall of Carthage in 698. It had served as a refuge for Christians fleeing the Arabs since the second half of the seventh century, but around 700 it was seized by the latter temporarily, who used it as a base for raiding Sicily.⁶ The period of its recovery by the Byzantines, which cannot be precisely dated, is the most likely time for the foundation of John’s monastery. During the years 803–806, three dissident

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ecclesiastical hierarchs, Euthymios of Sardis, Theophylaktos of Nikomedia, and Eudoxios of Amorion, were exiled on the island at the orders of Emperor Nikephoros I (802–811).⁷ A chance reference in a Carolingian chronicle records that in 806 raiders from Muslim Spain captured sixty monks on Pantelleria, presumably from John’s monastery given the small size of the island, some of whom the Frankish Emperor Charlemagne was able to ransom a year later and enable to return home.⁸ How much longer the monastery survived cannot be determined. The island was still in Byzantine hands at the time of a naval battle between forces dispatched by Ziyâdat Allâh I (817–838) against a Byzantine fleet in 835.⁹

By this time the Muslims had already settled in Sicily itself at Palermo, where they had established a capital in 831, though the conquest of the larger island took several decades. Syracuse did not fall until 878 and Taormina until 902 (later reoccupied and lost again in 962). Von Falkenhausen (“Patellaria,” p. 1594) broadly assigns the Arab conquest of tiny Pantelleria to the period between 836 and 864. Although Malta did not fall until 870, an early date within the range proposed seems preferable.¹⁰ At whatever time the island fell to the Arabs, the monastic community cannot long have survived as Pantelleria was thoroughly Islamicized thereafter.

Analysis

This document is the only monastic *typikon* that predates the Studite monastic reform. Widely assumed (without certain evidence) to be only a fragment of a longer document, it has been preserved only in an old Slavic version, surely the most curious means of preservation of any of our documents given its original place of composition on remote Pantelleria. Unlike many later *typika*, the document shows no interest in regulating constitutional, administrative and financial matters. Instead, like (3) *Theodore Studites* and even (4) *Stoudios*, the documents closest to it in date, its principal concern is the regulation of the lives of the monks of the monastery for which it was written.

The *typikon* depicts a community living under strict, authoritarian rule (n.b. [18], restricting whispering and written communications) in one of the most remote parts of the Byzantine Empire. The monks lived a life emphasizing prayer, singing, genuflections, strict fasting, and strenuous manual labor. This was a hierarchically organized foundation, under the firm rule of a superior, overseers, and elders. Monks were also assigned places in the church according to their rank. Anyone who dared to differ was to “be shown his place” [1]. The emphasis of the document is on duties and punishments for infractions of the rules, particularly latenesses and absences.¹¹ Punishments include: lying face down, deprivation of food, and expulsion from the community. The suppression of homoeroticism was a particular concern of the author.¹² The penal emphasis, present earlier in the *Penitential* mistakenly attributed to Basil of Caesarea, finds some echoes in ninth- and tenth-century Byzantine documents (such as (4) *Stoudios* and (11) *Ath. Rule*), then drops out of sight again until the twelfth century, when (31) *Areia* [T9] shows its influence. Direct Basilian quotes turn up again in Cypriot *typika* (34) *Machairas* and (45) *Neophytos* of the early thirteenth century. However, nowhere else among the medieval Byzantine monastic foundation documents or their late antique predecessors is there evidence of such a grim regime for daily life and discipline as found here. The possibility that this was in fact a monastic prison might well seem worth entertaining, were it not for the inclusion of expulsion among the recommended punishments.

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Overall, this is a document of some sophistication, a recognizable if also brief (and possibly incomplete) *typikon*, all the more remarkable for its early date, remote provenance, and bizarre means of preservation—in a rough Church Slavonic translation (no Greek original has been found yet) that, judging from its archaic language and character, was probably made in the ninth century; the present shape of the text, often corrupted and difficult to understand, may however be due to tradition and subsequent copies. The Pachomian influence astutely observed by von Falkenhausen¹³ is an indication that this is one of the very earliest documents in our collection, but should not be overemphasized. Manual labor, absent or at any rate seemingly less important in subsequent documents, still has a place here as it does in the Pachomian, Basilian, and (to a lesser extent) Syriac traditions. Yet features such as the use of wine [4] and the bows accompanying prayers [3] as well as the regulations for liturgical observances ([8] through [10]) demonstrate that, despite the links to Pachomios and Basil, this is a document of a later era.

Notes on the Introduction

1. An eighth-century date seems most likely in view of the chronological framework provided by the history of the island of Pantelleria (see below, Institutional History).
2. For details, see Scalia, “Pantelleria,” pp. 79–81.
3. First proposed by E. Golubinsky, *Istoriia russkoi tserkvi*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1901), p. 652; see also Scalia, “Pantelleria,” p. 82, and von Falkenhausen, “Patellaria,” p. 1594, and “Monachesimo,” pp. 153–54 and 157.
4. Canon XV: *In Sanctum Basilium Patellariae hegumenum*, ed. Acconcia Longo, *Canones Iunii*, pp. 163–76, with commentary at pp. 375–81; the apparent reference to John’s *typikon* is at verses 63–64.
5. Scalia, “Pantelleria,” p. 74; there are many variants on the name, including Patallarea, Patelarea, Patalaria, etc.
6. M. Amari, *Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Catania, 1933), pp. 235, 290, based on Arabic sources.
7. See Jean Gouillard, “La Vie d’Euthyme de Sardes († 831), une oeuvre du patriarche Méthode,” *T&M* 10 (1987), 1–101, at 5, 17, 25–27.
8. *Annales Fuldenses, sive annales regni Francorum orientalis*, ed. Fr. Kurze (Hanover, 1891), Anno 807, p. 124.
9. See the Arab historian Ibn al-Athîr, in A. A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, vol. 1: *La dynastie d’Amorium (820–867)* (Brussels, 1935), p. 360; Amari, *Storia*, p. 437.
10. This also provides a *terminus ante quem* for the iambic poem in honor of Antiochos of St. Sabas by the otherwise unknown Arsenios, “monk of Pantelleria, who became archdeacon.” See Odorico, “Sanzione,” pp. 11–13 and 16–19 (Greek text and Italian translation).
11. See [1], [5], [6], [7], [8], [10], [11], [13], [14], [15], [17], [20].
12. See [5], [6], [7], [12], [20].
13. See von Falkenhausen, “Patellaria,” *ODB*, p. 1594, and “Monachesimo,” pp. 155–57; and [6], [7], [8], [11], [13], [14], [17], [18]. For specific Pachomian parallels, see also notes to the translation for these chapters.

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Translation

[Note: The translation below is based on Mansvetov's edition of the Ms. Russian State Library, supplemented by sections in pointed brackets based on Dujčev's facsimile of the Bodleian manuscript.]

Rules of the Monastery of Our Holy Father John the Priest, Superior of Pantelleria

From the holy books teaching salvation to all [men]. Whoever has rejected [this world] and has entered the monastic state for the sake of [his] salvation cannot be saved unless he observes [the rules] which I intend to write down [here].

[1.] At the striking of the [sacred] semantron, let [the monks] gather at the porch of the church and go into the church as soon as the elders arrive.¹ Let them all bow together to the cross and start singing the Lord's Prayer as well as perform in the proper order the hymns of either the matins or the vespers or the hours. Let each one stay constantly at the place which becomes his rank and have no permission to move from this place and stay at another one. Should he start acting thus, leaving his own place and staying at another one, let him be shown [his place] once, twice, and thrice. Should he not hearken [in spite of this], let him be expelled from the church congregation.

[2.] Likewise, let [the monks] approach the communion, the meal, and the salutation according to the order² of their status. Again, let them keep the proper order also during the day. Let them recite their prayers three times from the first to the third hour, three or four times from the third to the sixth, two times from the sixth to the ninth, until vespers, and three times during the night.

[3.] Let prayers be recited as follows: after the Lord's Prayer let [the monks] stand a short while and then bow³ nine times, if they are in good health, and each time they stand up again let them lift their hands to God imploring for his grace. {Let them bow three times and lift their hands three times as well.} When they have finished, let them bow three times, and then bow to one another and take leave. (Should they be unable to bow, as it has already been said, nine times, let them bow three times [only], and lift their hands three times as well, and then take leave.) In all it will

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amount to twelve [times]. This we order to be done in the winter days, but in the summer days let prayers be increased. Thus, when the days are lengthening, let one more prayer be added to each [further] hour.

[4.] Once more, whoever seeks salvation and enters the monastic state, should he be physically healthy, [that is] able to do it, let him fast during the day.⁴ Should [he] instead be performing heavy work, let [him] have one fourth [of the regular portion], and a cup of wine before his meal. Whereas, should his body grow thin and look feeble, let him fast on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday [only]. He who is unwilling to comply with these commandments shall not achieve salvation.

[5.] When [the monks] gather in the cells where they sleep or while doing a service, it is unbecoming either to visit each other and sit on the bed or to ask concerning any matter.⁵ Should one's property be forcibly retained by someone else, let him go to the ecclesiastical overseers,⁶ that they repair this wrong [for him]. Should anyone manifestly disregard such rule, and not hearken two or three times to admonitions, let him be expelled from the monastery. Should anyone be seen drawing one of his brothers aside and taking him to his cell to converse with him, let that one be admonished [two or three times], then, if he is unwilling to hearken, let him be stripped of his garb and banished from the monastery. Again, should it be necessary for [one] to talk about any matter, let him stand and talk [to the other] outside the church before the brothers, so that no one may be misled.

[6.] Likewise, whoever is walking with another on a road, and they are seen holding hands or embracing or kissing, should one not hearken to admonitions, let him be expelled from the brotherhood, so that the others may not be corrupted at the sight [of this].⁷

[7.] Let also the monks not ride a beast of burden two of them together, but let each one go and ride in turn.⁸ The same [applies] to both sitting and sleeping.⁹ Whoever shall frequently converse with one, but it is not clear what the conversation is about, let him be liable to the aforesaid punishment.

[8.] When [the monks] get to the choir, should anyone come before [the beginning of] the song, let him enter, recite the prayer, and take his own place. Should anyone become lazy or, for any reason whatsoever, be late and not show up, let him stay outside the church and, as the brethren go out, let him fall down before them and explain the reason why he was not present, so that they come to know [it].¹⁰ Let the superior interrogate him, and if forgiveness is proper, let him forgive. If it is not, let him inflict the punishment. Let this be done for the matins or the vespers or any other service; for which, however, those who have arrived early must wait with the other brethren.

[9.] Should it happen that one is busy for whatever reason, let him join the [singing of the] canon later; and on account of this let the worshipers sing the odes, always in the entirety of their verses, and then start singing the *troparia*. When the nights are [too] short, let this be done after lunch

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time <as we have said>. We have also ordered that you, if at all possible, sing the odes in the entirety of their verses along with the *troparia*, but this is [left] to the authority of the elders. It is certainly always profitable to exert oneself on both the saints' and the Lord's days <in the summer>, but also in the winter¹¹ let us make every effort to sing the odes from the first to the last verse as well as the *troparia*. The ecclesiastical precept is the following: four *kathismata* and two lections during the winter, two *kathismata* and one lection during the summer (as for the lection, [let it be read] as long as the brethren are not judged to be overworked), and further prayers.

[10.] When you are <standing> in the church for the hymnody, listen to what the precentor says and sing [exactly] as he is prescribing. Let no one have power either to change any word or to sing a different hymn. Even if you become aware that the precentor is mistaken, only those who are in the front shall have the right either to change any of the words or to begin a different hymn. All others of you keep [observing] the proper order. Should anyone dare to break the present rule, let him be liable to the punishment of lying face downward. Again, we order to sing in the proper order, according to the habit acquired from deacon John. Let all sing in this way. Should any of you be accustomed to sing differently, we request him to relinquish his habit, and adapt to his brothers', [so that] harmony among the brethren be displayed in this matter.

[11.] As for the collective liturgy, should anyone fail to come [in time] without any reason, communion is not fitting for him. Should he start doing this often, let him be liable to the punishment of lying face downward.¹²

[12.] Rush zealously to the church and even more to the holy liturgy. Do not stay too close to each other. When you bow and recite the prayer, on bowing let each one keep away from the side of his brother and not stand close to him so that when he bows he crowds his brother.

[13.] Again, whenever a superior summons [the brethren] to meals, let [them] all move as [if they were going] to church. Should a few arrive before the others, let them wait a short while for their fellow [monks], and then start reciting the prayer over the food. Let the overseers interrogate anyone who comes late.¹³ Should he have been late because of laziness, let them send him back without food. Should it be Lent or the Christmas fast, let him remain [in this condition] until exactly the same hour of the next day. Should it not be a fast day, let him remain [thus] until evening; then, having obtained forgiveness, let him eat. Should he not repent his fault, let him not eat, for he is abusive of others and on account of this he refuses to humble himself to anyone.

[14.] Whenever the brethren are called to work, let them hasten [to it] as they do to food.¹⁴

[15.] Let the overseers keep the time for prayers and not strike [the semantron] whenever it is time to prostrate before Christ. There shall be two overseers, to announce the proper order of the mysteries, and if the brotherhood perceive that they are lazy, by the end of the day, there where they gather to eat, let it inflict upon them the punishment and say: "As our prayers were not perfect, [similarly] do not eat."

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[16.] Let it be forbidden to go to any kind of work without asking [permission from] the elders. Let these notify the monks who should leave to go to work and him who, instead, is ordered to sit in his cell while also working for the others, as is proper. Indeed, it is fitting that out of love you <do Christ's> work for one another.

[17.] Should anyone expose his garment outside, and the sun shines on it for three mornings, let him be liable to the appropriate punishment.¹⁵ Let him go himself to ask for punishment, confessing his sin, since he trespassed. Let this be done for any kind of fault, if one wants to be saved. Even if the elders do not come to know [of his sin], he himself must be conscious of both what it is and his desert. Whoever out of laziness does not care to undergo the punishment, may his soul have life!

[18.] Do not whisper among yourselves, since whispering presupposes the sin of theft.¹⁶ But should there be any necessity for conversing, then converse among yourselves in a clear manner, not shouting but with moderate voice. Let no one write any word on paper to another, unless he have a great need [for it], or else it be Lent. All the more so since we have already said to speak out in a clear voice.

[19.] We enjoin you to revere your overseers as [you would revere] God himself. Keep loving and revering not the elders alone, but all of you mutually. As we have said, your souls shall have life, or it will hardly be possible to have life.

[20.] Should a brother declare: "I cannot stay with this brother in the same cell or [sit] at the same table," let him be asked on account of what sin does he do (it).¹⁷ Should he answer [that it is] owing to extreme weakness, lest his brother cause scandal, we exact that an inquiry be made into this matter. Should the latter state: "[Yes], I am causing scandal," and this being the reason why he separates himself from the proper order of the brethren, and [why also he] says: "I wish to sit alone in my cell," let them bring the church priests to him and let him be instructed amidst the brethren. Should he still not hearken, let them take off his monastic garments in front of the church and then expel him from the monastery.¹⁸

[21.] For whoever does not observe all the monastic rules and, at the same time, does not keep and follow the present regulations becomes estranged from the Church. This is what is said in the book, and let this be done! He who loves his neighbor until death shall <be willing to> lay down his own life (for him), and shall serve him and remain¹⁹ with him. He who abides by such rules of our Fathers, and keeps them, shall have life.

Notes on the Translation

1. For use of the *semantron*, see (4) *Stoudios* [AB2], [B14], [AB31], [AB33], [AB36]; porch of the church: perhaps the *narthex* is meant here, cf. (4) *Stoudios* [AB2].
2. A reference to the performance of the canonical hours (the *akolouthia*).

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3. For bows, see (4) *Stoudios* [A2], [A6], (22) *Evergetis* [4], and (29) *Kosmosoteira* [13].
4. Requiring monks to fast throughout the day is an extraordinary requirement in the context of what is known from our other documents; see Appendix B: The Regulation of Diet in the Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents, A: General Rules.
5. For the discouragement of fraternization, compare to the regulation found in (4) *Stoudios* [18]; (7) *Latros* [11]; (22) *Evergetis* [9], [21]; (27) *Kecharitomene* [41], [47]; (29) *Kosmosoteira* [21]; (30) *Phoberos* [21], [25], [39], [40]; (32) *Mamas* [17], [35]; (33) *Heliou Bomon* [17], [34]; (34) *Machairas* [63], [113]; (55) *Athanasios I* [4]; and (58) *Menoikeion* [8], [17].
6. Slavonic *pristavniki*; for these overseers, see (4) *Stoudios* [18], (11) *Ath. Rule* [17], and (22) *Evergetis* [31], etc.
7. Vaguely reminiscent of the Pachomian *Praecepta* [95], ed. A. Boon, *Pachomiana Latina* (Louvain, 1932), p. 40; trans. A. Veilleux, *Pachomian Chronicles* (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1981), p. 161: “No one may clasp the hand or anything else of his companion; but whether you are sitting or standing or walking, you shall leave a forearm’s space between you and him.”
8. Cf. Pachomian *Praecepta* [109], ed. Boon, p. 42; trans. Veilleux, p. 162: “Two men shall not sit together on a bare-backed donkey or on a wagon shaft.”
9. Cf. Pachomian *Praecepta* [95], ed. Boon, p. 40; trans. Veilleux, p. 161: “Nor shall you sit two together on a mat or a carpet.”
10. Cf. Pachomian *Praecepta* [17], ed. Boon, p. 17; trans. Veilleux, p. 148: “If anyone is missing when one of the elders is chanting, that is, reading the psalter, he shall at once undergo the order of penance and rebuke before the altar.”
11. That is, on feasts of the Lord.
12. Cf. Pachomian *Praecepta* [9], ed. Boon, p. 15; trans. Veilleux, p. 146: “. . . anyone who comes after the first prayer shall be punished in the manner described above and shall remain standing in the refectory.”
13. Cf. Pachomian *Praecepta* [32], ed. Boon, p. 21; trans. Veilleux, p. 150: “If someone comes late to eat, without [being detained by] an order of the superior, he shall likewise do penance, or return to his house without eating;” for later interrogation of latecomers to meals, see (22) *Evergetis* [31], (27) *Kecharitomene* [25], (29) *Kosmosoteira* [37], and (30) *Phoberos* [48].
14. Cf. Pachomian *Praecepta* [58], ed. Boon, p. 31; trans. Veilleux, p. 156: “When the signal is given to go to work, the housemaster shall lead them, and no one shall remain in the monastery except by order of the father.”
15. Cf. Pachomian *Praecepta* [68], cf. [69], ed. Boon, p. 33; trans. Veilleux, p. 157: “They shall not go do laundry unless one signal has sounded for all. They shall follow their housemaster and do the washing in silence and with discipline.”
16. Cf. Pachomian *Praecepta* [94], ed. Boon, p. 40; trans. Veilleux, p. 161: “No one shall speak to his neighbors in the dark.” For the restriction of (external) written correspondence, see the Basilian *Poenae* 59, PG 31, col. 1313C, (22) *Evergetis* [22], (34) *Machairas* [131], and (45) *Neophytos* [CB5].
17. A disciplinary problem analogous to that of (22) *Evergetis* [9], which, however, focuses on arguments over precedence at table.
18. For the ceremony of stripping monastic vestments from an unworthy monk, see (20) *Black Mountain* [76], [77].
19. Slavonic *ljazhet*, i.e., be buried.