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Monasticism in St Jerome's Letters and Lives of the Hermits*

FIRST BEGINNINGS—EGYPT.

THE monastic movement as it definitely took shape in the fourth century, began in Egypt and may well have been

(*). The significance of Jerome's works in ecclesiastical history has been extensively studied, but not yet thoroughly exhausted. In particular, their evidence for the early history of monasticism has not been adequately investigated. Dom E.C. Butler in his chapter on monasticism in the Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. I, does not even quote Jerome among his sources while he quotes the Letters of St. Augustine, and clearly does not take into consideration either Jerome's Lives of the Hermits or his Letters. Leonard Hughes in his "The Christian Church in the Epistles of St. Jerome" (1923) has a chapter on monasticism but he does not by any means exhaust his subject. De Labriolle in his chapter on monasticism in "Histoire de l'Eglise", published under the general editorship of Fliche and Martin (Vol. III, 1936), makes some use of Jerome's Letters, but, again, he does not exhaust their evidence.

Hence the reason for this study. In it we are summarising the picture of the monastic movement given by St. Jerome in his works. It is not pretended that Jerome's picture is complete, but it is certainly comprehensive, and, including as it does, the intimate relation of the movement to the social conditions of the fourth century and to the development of ecclesiastical organisation (aspects not usually enlarged upon by other writers on monasticism), it has a considerable value for the historian.

This article is Chapter VI of Part II of a Doctor's Thesis entitled "St. Jerome's Letters and 'Lives of the Hermits', with reference to (1) Art and Style; (2) Social and Historical Significance", presented in June 1949. For a bibliography, see Thesis introd. pages XXX-XXXII; XXXVIII-XLV; and the very good list of works quoted by De Labriolle in his Chapter on monasticism in Histoire de l'Eglise, published by Fliche et Martin, 1937.

Butl. — Butler, E.C., Monasticism, Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. 1.
C.A.H. — Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. 12.
H. — Vita Hilarionis.
M. — Vita Malchi.
P. — Vita Pauli.
Letters are quoted in brackets by Number of letter and paragraph as in the Vienna Corpus.

connected with the persecutions as Jerome writes in P. 4. In the Decio-Valerian persecution, 250-260, many Christians tried to avoid arrest by flight. That was not easy in Italy, Spain and Gaul as all these lands were thoroughly occupied by Rome and fugitives had little chance of casting off their pursuers; but in Egypt it was different. The Roman occupation scarcely went beyond the coastline and the hinterland with its deserts afforded a sure protection. In Egypt where the valley of the Nile prolonged itself deep into the very heart of Ethiopia, the fleeing Christians were sure not only to avoid pursuit but also to settle, at least for a while, in a land which promised a fair return if properly cultivated. Hence it must have been the Egyptian hinterland that the refugees from the lands around Egypt sought, and it is no mere chance that monasticism began in Egypt. That this was the case of Paul Jerome explicitly tells us in his Life (P. 4). Although Decius in the beginning of his reign in 249 at once began with a determined attempt to stamp out Christianity, it was in the months of June-July 250 that the persecution reached its highest intensity (C.A.H. 12, p. 202). Hence we may fix on the year 250 as the one of the great exodus of Christians to the desert, and the Nile delta with its great theological school at Alexandria must have been singled out for a thorough purge. Although the persecution lasted only for a year and a half and died out with the death of Decius, the military anarchy that followed and the chequered events of the Gothic war made the situation too unstable for the refugees to be sure that the campaign of persecution would not be reopened as soon as the frontiers and the political stability were restored, as indeed it was reopened by Valerian in 257, and when in 260 the edicts of the persecution were revoked many might not have cared to return to their homes. The persecution had so often ended only to begin again that the edict of revocation in 260 might not have inspired much confidence that persecution might not be renewed after some time.

Eusebius in Eccl. Hist. 6.42 confirms this relation between the origins of monasticism and the persecutions of 250-260. But we feel that both in Jerome and in Eusebius there is some simplification of events. There is another factor which must have greatly contributed to the development of the anchorite movement. The economic conditions were not such as to entice back the refugees. Indeed, in the

second half of the third century 'anachoresis', especially of the lower classes took place in Egypt on a wide scale quite apart from Christianity and seems to have been due in part to a feeling that civilisation was doomed. It is significant that, as revealed in the "Historia Lausiaca" the monks, at the beginning of the fourth century seem to have been largely of the working class.

Some of the refugees, and, perhaps, others, too, would group themselves into small communities. The religious refugees were no doubt the very cream of the Christian population. While others had remained behind and tried to find some expedient by which to satisfy the imperial officers and conform in some way to the cult of the Emperor, these had preferred to give up their homes and their possessions. Christian practice with its insistence upon spiritual and moral values must have been the all-important factor in their daily life.

Such a way of life needed only a genius to organise and direct it to develop into a definite movement. According to St Athanasius this was the case with Antony. Antony went to the desert in 270, quite independently of the persecutions. The date 305 which St Athanasius gives for the founding of the first community of hermits under Antony's direction may be too late if the monastic movement is to be effectively connected with the Decio-Valerian persecution. Indeed, nothing hinders that there might have been struggling groups of ascetics, independent of and prior to that of Antony. That would agree with Jerome's contention that Antony only made monasticism famous but was not the sole originator of the idea (22. 36). The same conclusion can be reached from Sozomen's account in Eccl. Hist. 1. 13. Indeed, even the Life of Antony of Athanasius has a basis of agreement with such an account. For it makes clear that the first monastic group of Antony was formed at the invitation of other hermits who were already in the desert, leading an ascetic life independently of Antony. Moreover if we accept Jerome's view that monasticism was fundamentally one with the ascetic movement, as indeed it was, monasticism in its 'ascetic' form was already in existence in Alexandria before Antony himself (cf. Athan. Vt. Ant. 3), and the Brahmins of the lands beyond Persia were much earlier than Antony's time.

JEROME'S CHRONOLOGY OF THE BEGINNINGS OF MONASTICISM

In reconstructing Jerome's chronology of the beginning of monasticism from the Lives of the Hermits we have to base our calculations on Hilarion. In that Life Jerome is much more reliable than in Paul, and its important events can be dated with some accuracy by the help of other sources.

We may take as a starting point the date of the death of the Emperor Julian which is mentioned in H. 34 and which happened in 363. About three years later (365-366), Hesychius finds Hilarion (H. 38). We may date that event in 365, for, immediately after, Hilarion goes to Epidaurus at the time of the great earthquake recorded both by Ammianus Marcellinus (XXVI) and by Jerome in his Chronicon, in both cases the date given being 365. From Epidaurus Hilarion voyages to Cyprus and after some months (H. 42) he settles in a desert place where he remains for two years (H. 43) after which he goes to Bucolica in Egypt (H. 43). His departure for Bucolica might have therefore been early in 368. At Bucolica he stays for five years (H. 43), roughly until 373. In H. 44 Hilarion is again in Cyprus, in Paphos, where he dies at 80 years of age (H. 44 and 11). Considering the voyage from Egypt to Cyprus and the short space of time he must have been in Cyprus before he died we may put his death late in 373 or at the beginning of 374. We prefer the latter date. Hilarion, dying at 80, must have been born in 294; since in H. 29 we are told that Antony died when Hilarion was 65 (two years after the time when Hilarion's monastery had reached its fullest development, which happened when Hilarion was 63), Antony dies in 359, which is the date given by Jerome in the Chronicon. The accounts about Antony given by Socrates, Sozomen, Rufinus and the Vita Monachorum all confirm that date.

In Chron. 359 Jerome tells us that Antony died 105 years old: he was therefore born in 254. At 90 years of age he went to visit Paul (P. 7), which must have been in 344. If we accept Jerome's account of Paul being 113 years old at his death which occurred soon after Antony's visit to him (P. 7), Paul would have been born in 231 and at 16 he could not have gone to the desert as Jerome relates in P. 4. since the Decio-Valerian persecution began in 349. If we shorten the age of Paul (the figure of 113 is itself extremely improbable), perhaps by ten

years, Paul would be 16 in 257 at the outbreak of the second phase of the persecution. In view of these considerations we are inclined to believe that Jerome is incorrect in giving Paul's age as 113 in P. 7, that Paul was born in 244, and that he went to the desert in 257.

The long lives of 103 for Paul and 105 for Antony in this chronology might appear improbable. But one should consider that no one of the writers on monasticism quoted above objects to Antony's age (they do not mention Paul); that at the time stories went about of the long life of Paul (P. 1); that Sozomen in 6.34 accepts the long life of some of these hermits and explains it as a special favour of God.

In any case, both Antony and Paul must have lived to a very old age, quite close to a hundred: even if we grant that, our computations will not be affected in any considerable way.

Hence we feel that we cannot reject Jerome's broad statement that Paul went to the desert between 250-260, and that Antony became a hermit sometime later, perhaps between 270-280. The principal dates of Hilarion's life, his birth in 294, his going to the desert in 309, the setting up of his first monastic group in 331, his death in 373. we see no reason to reject.

We give hereunder Jerome's chronology in tabular form(1)

A.D.

244 Birth of Paul.
254 Birth of Antony (90 years before death of Antony in 344, P. 7).
257 Paul goes to the desert (second persecution).
270 Antony goes to the desert (approximately, at 16 according to St. Athanasius. Vit. Ant. 2).
294 Birth of Hilarion (80 years before death in 373, H. 11 and 44).
309 Hilarion goes to the desert (at age of 15, H. 3).
331 Hilarion works his first miracle, 22 years after he went to the desert (H. 13).
331 Monks gather round Hilarion (H. 13).
344 Death of Paul at 103 (correction to Jerome, P. 7).
357 Full development of Hilarion's monastery, when Hilarion is 63 (H. 29).
359 Death of Antony, two years later than preceding event (H. 29).
361 Hilarion starts on his journeys, presumably at accession of Julian (H. 30).

(1) This chronology shows some disagreement with that given for the beginning of monasticism in general by P. de Labriolle in Fliche et Martin, pp. 321 sqq. De Labriolle accepts Paul's age of 113 years and does not give due importance to certain events mentioned in Vita Hilarionis.

363 News of the death of Julian when Hilarion is at Bruchium (H. 34).
365 Hesychius finds Hilarion, about three years later—same year as the great earthquake of 365 (H. 38).
365 Hilarion goes to Cyprus (H. 43).
367 Hilarion departs from Cyprus (H. 43).
367 Hilarion goes to Egypt (H. 43).
372 Hilarion departs from Egypt after a stay of five years (H. 43).
372 Hilarion goes to Cyprus a second time where he dies some time after (H. 44).
373 Hilarion dies in Cyprus at 80 years of age (H. 44; 11).

PALESTINE AND SYRIA

At the end of the third century the monastic movement was still practically limited to the lower valley of the Nile, but in 309 approx. Hilarion, Antony's young disciple, settled in the Palestinian desert round Gaza when he was 16 years old (H. 9). About 22 years later (H. 13) his fame began to spread far and wide so that people began to join him in his hermit life (H. 14). We may therefore date the spreading of monasticism in Palestine and Syria as from 330-331.

Jerome asserts with emphasis that before Hilarion there had been no monks in Palestine and Syria (H. 14). Hence Theodoret's account that there were hermits in Northern Syria around Nisibis about 325 may have to be qualified. We can hardly doubt Jerome's statement as he must have had a thorough knowledge of monasticism in Syria from his own association with it barely forty years later. Shortly after its introduction in Palestine by Hilarion monasticism must have spread north to Syria, as between 340-350 it was already well established around the desert of Chalcis (M. 3). The mention of Sabinianus, the Governor of Roman Mesopotamia (2), in Vita Malchi, 10, fixes the date of the events related in that Life as 359-360. As Malchus had been a monk in Syria many years before, coenobitic monasticism must have been already established there before 350. In 374, when Jerome settled as a monk in Syria monasticism was well organised all over the country.

In Palestine coenobitic monasticism was more widely spread. Hilarion himself founded many monasteries (H. 24) which he visited yearly; and although in the pagan revival under Julian some of them, if not all were destroyed (H. 33), it is inconceivable that his monks would not rebuild them, or at any rate

(2) Cf. AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS, 18.4.

replace them by new ones after Julian's death: of two monasteries, at least, we are certain. Hilarion's own monastery at Maiuma had already been rebuilt when Hilarion died, as in H. 46 we are told that Hilarion's corpse was eventually buried there, and the monastery built by Epiphanius at Eleutheropolis (Epp. 51; 82) (3), was still standing when Jerome was in Bethlehem. About 374, Rufinus, Jerome's former school-friend and later his bitter enemy, and Melania, a Roman lady founded monasteries on the mount of Olives in Jerusalem. Later Jerome himself and Paula founded in 386 their monasteries at Bethlehem. From Ep. 46 we can gather that there were several monasteries in Jerusalem at the close of the fourth century.

Although Hilarion took his inspiration from Antony (H. 3), and for some time lived a strictly heremitical life, the monasticism which he later developed in Palestine was modelled on the Pachomian type, as is clear from the extensive agricultural pursuits that his monks devoted themselves to (H. 26-28). Hilarion himself, from his 38th year onwards lived mostly in the company of his monks (H. 13; 15; 17; 18; 29; et passim). These facts make us reject Butler's opinion that monasticism in Palestine had always been in large measure heremitical.

IN ROME AND IN THE WEST

In Rome monasticism dates from 341. In that year Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria came to Rome at the request of the Pope and remained until 344 as he could not return to his See where the Arian party had the upper hand. In Rome he met Marcella who heard with enthusiasm of Antony and Pachomius. The result was far-reaching but not immediate. She embraced the monastic vocation (127.5), but it was many years later that she set up the first monastic association in Rome (127.5). As Marcella died in 410 (127.14), and as in 341 she was already a widow after a six months married life, we may put her birth about 323.

In discussing the beginning of monasticism in Rome and indeed in the West one should distinguish between community monasticism and the monastic vocation practised privately. In 341 community monasticism was in its infancy even in the East: hence one can hardly expect to find monasteries in the West for some time after 341. Indeed, although Marcella may be considered as the pioneer of both in Rome, the private pur-

suit of the monastic vocation was the first to take definite shape. When in 382 Jerome came to Rome there were many in the Capital who were professed monastics as can be gathered from Ep. 22, but as regards monasteries it does not seem that there were any apart from Marcella's ascetic group, and, perhaps, that of Asella.

The monastic ideal, in its purely ascetic form, may have begun to spread little by little around Marcella's circle of friends between 345-350. By 352 it had already received some official recognition in Rome, since in that year Ambrose's sister Marcellina received the veil at the hands of Pope Laberius (4). As Jerome tells us that Sophronia was the second after Marcella to embrace the monastic vocation, and that after several years (127.5), that must have happened about 250, or, perhaps, a little before. But Marcella's association of ascetic ladies could have hardly taken such a definite shape as to attract public attention before 363. In 363-366 when Jerome was a student in Rome the movement was hardly noticeable at all. Jerome does not seem to have noticed it in any way, although in his circle of friends he mixed with Pammachius who was Marcella's cousin (48.4). Jerome never makes any reference to it in his letters written before he came to Rome in 382; and when he went to Rome after finishing his rhetorical studies he goes to Trier to study theology, presumably with the idea of becoming a priest, not a monk. We think that the first idea of a monastic life may have dawned upon Jerome when he was at Trier (3.5) where it is conceivable that Athanasius might have made known the monastic idea during his stay in that city as an exile in 335-338. Indeed, it is not too much to imagine the enthusiastic biographer of Antony himself living a quasi-monastic life at Trier (5). The fact that Jerome did not seek ordination when he finished his theological studies at Trier may be a clue that at that time he was already seriously entertaining the idea of embracing monasticism. When he returned to his native land in 369 he found monasticism already established in North Italy and he joined the movement in Aquileia.

In time, a small circle of aristocratic ladies in Rome gath-

(3) According to St. Epiphanius it was built in 335. P.G. 43.12.
(4) AMBROSIUS, De Virginibus, 3.1.
(5) Cf. AUGUST. Conf. 8.6

ered round Marcella, and, gradually, their ascetic practices took a regular and ordered shape. One of the first to be won over to the movement must have been Albina, Marcella's widowed mother, although at first she might not have been very sympathetic and had importuned Marcella to marry again after the death of her husband. By 383 the number of ladies who had attached themselves to the movement was considerable. They mostly came from a group of families connected together by inter-marriage or close ties of friendship, and about some of them Jerome gives a few details. The rich aristocratic Paula had been happily married to the pagan Toxotius and had led the usual life of a highly born lady in Roman society, but after the death of her husband she embraced the monastic vocation and devoted her ample resources to charity. Blesilla and Julia Eustochium were two of Paula's children. Blesilla had been widowed when still very young and for a while had freely mixed with the brilliant society of the Capital, but after a severe illness she changed her way of life and embraced the monastic vocation. Eustochium had shown an inclination for asceticism since her childhood and joined Marcella's circle when hardly more than a child of fourteen: in spite of the objections of some members of her family, notably her pagan uncle Hymettus and aunt Praetextata (107.5). Titiana and her widowed daughter Furia were closely connected with Paula since Furius, Titiana's son, had been the husband of Blesilla. Paulina, Paula's grand daughter, born in 397, was later herself to become a nun in her grandmother's convent in Bethlehem.

Close friends of Marcella were Fabiola who after divorcing her husband and marrying again had made penance, embraced the monastic vocation and devoted her riches to charitable purposes, Marcellina, the sister of Ambrose of Milan, Felicitas, Principia, and perhaps, Lea, who later founded a monastic community of her own (Ep. 23). Asella and another Marcella may have been close relatives of Marcella.

Perhaps associated with Marcella's circle after Jerome's departure to Bethlehem (possibly about 400) was Proba, the grandmother of Demetrias (130.5; ib. 7). Being one of the highest aristocrats in Rome she must have known well the families of Marcella and Paula, and at the capture of Rome, was at the head of a community of nuns (130.7), among whom was,

perhaps, Juliana, the widow of her son Olybrius, and later, certainly, Demetrias, Juliana's daughter (130.6).

Of the few Roman monks mentioned by Jerome Pammachius was the cousin of Marcella (48.4) and had earlier been the husband of Paula's daughter Paulina.

Jerome mostly enlarges on this group and has only passing references to other ascetics like Melania (39.5; 45.4) who must have been in close touch with Rufinus.

For a considerable time, possibly until 385, Marcella's circle was little more than an association of ascetically-minded ladies who while continuing to live in their own homes met at Marcella's palace on the Aventine (47.3) to pray in common, read the Scripture, sing psalms, and listen to ascetic lectures. But it could hardly be called a community since those who attended did not live together under any rule. Paula and Eustochium (46.1) as well as Blesilla (Ep. 39) while taking part in Marcella's gatherings (127.5) certainly lived in their own home. The first proper monastery seems to have been founded by Lea in a house outside Rome, in the neighbourhood of Ostia (23.1). After Jerome's departure from Rome in 385 Marcella set up a proper monastery in a house in one of the suburbs which were comparatively free from the bustle of the Capital (127.8) (6). Her example was followed by several other ladies and soon many monastic establishments were set up (127.8).

In its initial stages monasticism in Rome spread mainly in its feminine form: Jerome who was in close touch with it in 282-285 has few references to monks. In 282 or thereabout two monks, Sophronius and Antimius — perhaps of Eastern origin — tried to introduce the artificial austerities not uncommon in the East such as the carrying of chains, going barefooted, keeping their hair long and the like. But such practices were so strange to Rome that they found no favour (22.28).

Although by 383 the monastic movement had already taken definite shape in Rome, Jerome was no doubt greatly instrumental for its consolidation, and from 383 onwards it was mainly under his direction or through his advice that some of the noblest aristocrats in Rome joined the movement. Immensely

(6) At the capture of Rome in 410 Marcella and her community were at the Aventine residence. When the Goths invested the Capital Marcella presumably retired within the safety of the walls.

enhanced by their personal prestige and unbounded financial resources monasticism in Rome was sure of success.

The extent to which monasticism had already spread in 363-370 in the North of Italy can easily be surmised from the correspondence which Jerome kept up from Syria whither he went after leaving the hermits with whom he had settled at Aquileia. From Syria he corresponds during 374-379 with Paul of Concordia (Ep. 10), Niceas of Aquileia (Ep. 8), Chrysogonus of Aquileia (Ep. 9), Heliodorus of Altinum (Ep. 14), Antony of Aemona (Ep. 12), all of whom are monks, and the nuns of Aemona (Ep. 11). In 1.14, written in 374 and describing events which were supposed to have happened some time before, he hints that there was a nunnery in the neighbourhood of Vercellae which is confirmed by what we know of Eusebius, Bishop of Vercellae founding monasteries at that place about the same time (Butl. p. 371). Augustine in Confes. 8.6 and in De morib. Eccl. Cath., 33 speaks of a monastery of monks founded by Ambrose in Milan. Such facts suggest to us that monasticism in the North of Italy was, at least in its consolidation, indepedent of and prior to that of Rome.

It is not known whether it was from Rome and in particular from Jerome's monastic circle that the monastic idea spread in the West. In 127.5 Jerome seems to suggest that before the coming of Athanasius the monastic idea was unknown to the West. At any rate, Athanasius himself, as we have seen, may have cast the seed in Gaul, at Trier, and about 360 St. Martin of Tours was greatly responsible for giving definite shape to monasticism in the North of Gaul. But from 385 onwards it is certainly from Jerome that some of the most conspicuous exponents of monasticism in the West, in Spain, Gaul, Italy, continually seek inspiration and advice, and this in spite of the fact that Jerome is all the time far away in Palestine. Such are Lucinius and his wife Theodora in Spain (Ep. 71); Geruchia (Ep. 123); Rusticus (Ep. 125), and the one who in Ep. 117 asks for a letter for his mother and sister, all four from Gaul; Paulinus from Nola (Ep. 58); Julian from Dalmatia (Ep. 118); another Rusticus and his wife Artemia (Ep. 122) and Apronius, all three probably from the West. Salvina, daughter of Gildo, king of Mauretania, and wife of Nebridius, nephew of the Empress Aelia Flaccidia, wife of Theodosius, was probably living at Constantinople when Jerome

wrote Ep. 79 to her since soon after she became one of Chrysostom's deaconesses (7).

INITIAL UNPOPULARITY OF MONASTICISM

The pursuit of a life of self-imposed sacrifice and self-denial of even the most elementary comforts of life could only appeal to a few, and indeed where there was no appeal there was either contempt or positive opposition. Not that the cult of virginity as an element of religion was new to Roman minds. Nor, for that matter, was it to the peoples of the East. The institution of the Vestal virgins was almost as old as Rome itself and the terrible punishment meted out to them if they broke their vow is a clear indication of the atmosphere of awe which surrounded the idea of religious virginity in the public mind. The priestesses of Apollo, of the Achean Juno, Diana and Minerva were virgins (123.7). But the consideration of marriage as inferior to celibacy seemed superstitious enough to a world which was still half pagan and largely materialistic. To wage war, then, on the innocent joys of a pleasant company, of a delicate table, of a fine dress and an attractive make up was, at least, positively absurd, and many saw in it a direct challenge to Roman civilisation (38.5). Add to that the worldliness of some monastics and the conspicuous affectation, indeed, even aberrations of others, and the whole movement could easily appear to an unsympathetic crowd as mere sham and hypocrisy.

Hence the attitude of reproach (127.5; ib. 8) and criticism (Ep. 38) which ranged from such sarcastic humour as that which greeted the noble Pammachius when he went to the Senate dressed like a monk (66.6), to such open violence as that which ensued at the funeral of Blesilla when the infuriated mob broke out in cries of 'the monks to the Tiber' (39.6). Monks and nuns frequently became the subject of public gossip (108.20); they were looked upon with suspicion (38.2); wild stories went about them of their working their own destruction by immoderate fasting and self-imposed austerities (39.6). The mob pointed at them and singled them out as 'Greeks and impostors' (38.5; 54.5); pagans and Jews fanned the spirit of unpopularity (45.4; 130.19). Hence often those who chose the monastic vocation had to battle against the opposition of their

(7) Cf. Freemantle, p. 162.

own relatives who made use even of their maids at home to overcome the devotee's resolve. So Jerome warns Furia against her servants who merely wish to sell her to their own advantage, against the snares that relatives may set for her, and against the well-meant but mistaken suggestions of her father (54.6). So Blesilla's relations spare nothing to make her abandon her purpose (38.2); Praetextata and Hymettus try hard to dissuade Eustochium from her resolve to be a nun (107.5). Indeed, down to 390 Jerome often refers to such family opposition. Even the fashionable clergy occasionally joined the common cry. The book of Helvidius against which Jerome in 383 wrote the treatise "De perpetua virginitate B. Mariae" was inspired by the campaign against celibacy; and although after 290 the storm gradually abated Jerome's books against Jovinian (written in 392) and against Vigilantius (406) show clearly that there were still after that date irreconcilable elements who felt strong enough to organise the opposition to monastic asceticism on a scientific basis.

Nor was this hostile attitude limited to Rome. The Lives of Hilarion and Malchus suggest that at least down to the principate of Julian (363) opposition was still strong in the East. Malchus in Syria had to overcome the threatening of his father and the coaxing of his mother before he could follow his vocation (M. 3). During the brief reign of Julian the enemies of monasticism in Palestine not only attacked and destroyed Hilarion's monasteries but even procured a decree of banishment against him and against his principal monk Hesychius (H. 33).

(To be continued)

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