

Summery

The current thesis investigates the economic activities that churches and monasteries in Egypt achieved during the late Roman epoch. The study explores how these religious institutions practised different economic roles either in agriculture, commerce or even in industry. This is the reason why the study is initiated by giving the reader a historical background of the churches and monasteries in Egypt. Such a survey contributes to trace its development up to the late Roman Era. It also sheds light upon the movement of monasticism and its origin.

Furthermore, the study examines the relation between the Egyptian monasteries and the desert as they are both originally linked in minds. The economic activities of these desert monasteries are certainly different from the fertile land of the Nile River.

The study illustrates how the Egyptian monasteries made use of different environmental places in Egypt, either in deserts or beside the Nile Banks or even amidst Egyptian cities and countries. This, undoubtedly, asserts an important fact. As it shows how monasteries play a social role in their societies. Consequently, the mutual influence can never be ignored in this context.

The first chapter of this study is entitled: "**Agricultural Activity**" this chapter illuminates how the agricultural lands owned by Christian institutions in Egypt developed. How this period begins from the moment Christianity is acknowledged at the beginning of the fourth century and its rites were practised freely. From these

moments and on, the lands of these churches and monasteries play a pivotal economic role. Individual and collective gifts and donations contribute to increase the lands more and more. This makes a study of the economic activity of these lands a necessity. Herin lies the significance of this study.

With the width of the ecclesiastic agricultural lands, the need to rent or even participate with farmers to cultivate these lands become more necessary. Religious institutions, therefore, made contracts to save rights for both sides. Different crops are planted in these lands. Animal breeding is one of the most important activities that strongly serve the agricultural development. The role of animals cannot be ignored in cultivating these lands.

The second chapter: "industrial and professional shows how many industries were flourished in churches and monasteries in Egypt. Among these are food industries, including oil, wine, grinding crops, pottery industry, mat industry with its various types as well as many other professions such as texture and building trades, copying and covering books, tanning, etc.

The third chapter of this study is entitled: "**Financial and Commercial Activity**" Here, the study highlight, the importance of transportation and its role in flourishing trade. The present chapter also tackles different issues pertaining to the commercial aspects for churches and monasteries including imposed taxes as well as taxes collected for the save of these institutions, the money paid to the treasury is also considered. Financial responsibilities of these

religious institutions are not also ignored in this chapter, buying and selling processes, the commercial navy, loans, etc.

The fourth focuses on: "**Gifts and Expenses**" It accurately traces the main sources of donations either individual by emperors or even collective. Then, the chapter considers the various expenses like good acts, the fees of workers, the amounts paid to the treasury. Many emperors and Christians participate positively to increase the income of these religious institutions, some in their wills, others through direct donations. Building churches, restoring their possessions, taxes are examples also of donation types, which are increased especially often acknowledging Christianity side by side with other creeds.

Emperors presented gifts and presents especially in feasts and happy occasions. Rich people also presented parts of their wealth to improve these aspects. In conclusion, the researcher offers the most significant results the study raised.