“St. Anthony El Badwany Church in El Daher District, Cairo, 1899-1915AD”
(Descriptive and analytical Study)

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Abstract:
The church of St. Antony El Badwany follows the Franciscan monasticism. It is located in El Daher district in Cairo. The church dated back to 1899-1915 AD., during the reign of Sultan Hussien Kamel (1914-1917 AD). The research follows the descriptive and analytical method of research. The study aims to provide a full survey of such a style of Franciscan architecture to analyze its artistic elements and provide a full description for the studied construction. The church has not been published. It is considered a good example of the influence of the European Gothic Architecture on Egypt’s Franciscan Architecture.

Keywords:
Franciscan Monasticism- Church- Architecture- St. Anthony El Badwany- Gothic Style- Pointed Arches- Rose windows.

Introduction:
St. Anthony EL Badwany:
St. Anthony of Padua was born in 1195 AD. He was born in Lisbon City in Portugal. He was named Fernando. He was born to a wealthy and noble family. His father was called “Martino”, his mother was called “Maria Teresa Travera”, who was called later “the mother of the Saint”.

When he was fifteen years old, he decided to convert to monasticism in the monastery of Augustine Monks in his town, then to the Cross Monastery, at that time he met two missioners of

1 He was baptized when he was eight days old. His mother devoted Him to the Mother of the God. He was sent to the Cathedral School at the age of seven. See; C. M. Antony, Saint Antony of Padua; the Miracle-Worker 1195-1231, Longmans& Green and Co., New York, 1911, PP. 1-2. Also See;
Franciscan; their hair was shaven in the form of crown, wearing dark –rough robes, and each has a rope around his waist.

They were the followers of St. Francis from Assisi. He spoke to them and knew their way in worship. A day later, he asked them to follow him and to be one of the Franciscans. They agreed to Him. He changed his name from Fernando to be Anthony. He was admitted to the Franciscanism in 1220AD. ¹ He loved the new Monasticism, worked hard, travel to many countries, to help the people and spread the faith among them. ² St. Anthony died at the age of thirty-six old on Tuesday, 17 June 1231AD, and buried in Lady of God Church in Padua, so the church celebrated on 17 June annually with his feast.³

There are four churches in Egypt were named after Him; the first one is in Alexandria, the second is in Cairo, the third is in Naqada City, and the fourth is in Armant City. All of them were dated back to the beginning of the twentieth Century. The church located in Cairo is exactly located in El Daher district (Fig. 1).⁴ The church was built by the Italian engineer Ernist de Farrow and was inaugurated on the 20th of April 1915AD. The rituals practiced inside the church are Latin and Coptic.

**General Description of the Monastery Buildings:**

The enclosure wall has surrounded the church from the outside include the main entrance with a door in the western side, it leads to a large courtyard includes; a building for the monks, a new cave, a library, statue of St. Anthony El Badwani, a room for the guardian, and the church.

**The building of the monks** takes the shape of Noahs ark. It includes a house for expatriate students, and a dwelling place for the monk; the patron of the church.

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¹ Fernando was one of the names of the kings, which means in Spanish “the man who fights for peace”. He changed it to the name of the patron Saint of the monastery. See, C. M. Antony, *Saint Antony of Padua*, P. 16.
² For more information see; The Centro Studi Antoniani, *The Sermons of Saint Antony of Padua*, Translated by Paul Spilsbury, Padua, Italy, 1979.
⁴ El Daher square was originally established by Bahri Mamluk King El Daher Rukn El Din Baibars Al Bondokdary, and named after Him. It was situated in the boundaries of El louq area, overlooking the Nile. See: تَقَي الْدِينِ أَبِي الْعباسِ أَحْمَدُ بْنُ عَلِيِّ الْمُقْرِيْزِي مُؤِنَّعُ الْحَكَمِ، الْمُؤْظِرُ بِالْحَكَمِ، مَكَّيَةُ النَّجْمَةِ الْمَدِينَةِ، الْجِزَاءُ الْثَانيُّ، ص۲۹۸.
A New cave (Pl.1) of the Holy Virgin Mary is located in front of the Church. It is newly added to the courtyard for ten years ago. It is made out of small stones stuck together and then it was painted with a glossy layer.

A statue of St. Anthony (Pl. 2) is placed on the eastern side of the monastery. The statue and its pedestal are made out of marble. It dated back to twenty-five years ago. It represents St. Anthony standing, wearing the Franciscan clothing, and holding Jesus Christ as an infant (Pl. 2 A). A Room for the guardian is located beside the main door of the monastery.

The library (Pl. 3) was built by the Father Athanasius Hunien, who was responsible for the printing and publishing of Franciscan Monasticism. That was in the year of 1972AD. Large numbers of books are available for the visitors of the church.

The Church of St. Anthony El Badwany (Pl. 4):
The church was built according to gothic style of Architecture. It has a western-eastern axis. The western Façade is built out of red brick. It is about 23 m. wide, and 11 m. high. It is divided into three parts; Middle, left and right parts (Pl. 5).

The central part has the main entrance in the lower part; this part is higher than the others. There are four steps in front of the door, followed by a wooden door; it is about 2 m. wide, 3m. high, decorated with Tau the symbol of Franciscan(Pl. 6). The entrance is topped by a pointed arch supported on two cylindrical small columns; their capitals are decorated with acanthus leaves. 

1 Gothic Architecture was introduced during the medieval period in the twelfth century in France. The term gothic was admitted during the seventeenth century. It was introduced to overcome the problems of the medieval architecture of darkness, coldness and dampness. It’s characterized by elegant high constructions. Best example of gothic art is presented in building Cathedrals and churches. The gothic architecture was introduced into Egypt in year of 1304 AD. Its elements were firstly implied on the façade of El Nassir Muhamed Ibn Qalaun Madrasa in Cairo. It was similar to St. John Church in Akaa, after the conquest of El Ashraf Khalil Ibn Qalaun. See: La Paroisse Notre-Dame de Clermont, Art Roman et Art Gothique, Clermont-Ferrand, 2013, P. 13. Also See; Dossier Pedagogique, Architecture Gothique, La Cite de l’architecture& du Patrimoine, PP. 4-6. المقرزي، المواضيع والإعتبار بذكر الخطط والأثار، ص 231-3.

2 The emblem is consisted of two parts; back and front sides. The back one represents the Tau cross symbol of the Franciscan. The front represents two crossing hands; the right one is of Jesus the Christ with a nail in the middle and the left hand of Farancis Al Assisi. See: Xavier Seubert and Oleg Bychkov, Franciscan Art and The Construction of Religion, Franciscan Institute Publications, 2013, PP. 228-231.

3 The pointed arches are of characteristics of Gothic art. The gothic style was called the pointed style. It started to be used after 1200 AD. It has both aesthetic and architectural functions; it is used to distribute the weight of ceiling from the walls and gives aesthetic view. See: F. A. Paley, A Manual of Gothic Architecture, John Van Voorst, Paternoster Row, London, 1845, P. 74.
Two rose windows are decorated the western façade. They are identical except that the upper one is larger than the lower. The first inside the pointed arch and the second is found in the upper part. They are used for ventilation and illumination.\(^1\)

On both sides of the entrance there are two rectangular buttresses; in each side reached to the roof end with four architraves, and a small towers on the top. The top of the towers designed in pinnacle design.\(^2\) Two decorative cornices placed in the upper part; the lower cornice consists of blind units, while the upper part consists of open units. Above the cornice and in the highest point of the façade there is a cross. The top of the façade takes a triangular design (Fig. 2).

**Foundation tablets** (Pl. 7), there are two marble tablets inscribed in Latin and Arabic languages; the Latin is to the left and the Arabic is placed to the right side. They show the foundation date of the church. They are with the same text which reads as follows:

“Church of Saint Anthony El Badwany, El Zaher, Cairo. The Foundation stone was placed by the father Athansius Fatory, the Archbishop of the monastery, in 7 July 1912, in the era of his holiness pope Benedict XV and the Sultan of Egypt Hussien Kamel, and it was inaugurated by the very respectful father Fintshenso Frakasi Sieni, the chief of the Franciscan mission in Upper Egypt, in 20\(^{th}\) of April 1920”

**The Left and the right parts of the western façade** are identical; each has rectangular twin windows topped with a pointed arch, includes a small lunar, the double pointed arches inside each other.\(^3\)

**The Southern Façade;** (Pl. 8) the southern façade overlooks the courtyard. It is 23 m. wide and 11 m. high. It has two rectangle twin windows 2.15 m. high topped by a pointed arches includes lunars. The entrance is in the eastern side of the southern façade leads to Jesus Heart’s

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\(^1\) Windows take the form of roses are called Oculus. This design was one of Gothic architectural elements. It dated back to the Norman Period (1090-1160). The best and earliest example was found in St. James Church in Bristol. Generally it takes the form of roses, which is divided from inside by stone mullions and bars. It takes the form of a wheel. It usually placed in the western facades below the pointed arches. See: John Henry Parker, *A B C of Gothic Architecture*, James Parker and Co., London, Thirteenth Edition, 1907, PP. 44-45.

\(^2\) The design of such buttresses is dated back to the early gothic architecture. It is a flat projection to strength the wall. Later, it takes many forms and designs. See: John Parker, *A B C of Gothic Architecture*, P. 66.

\(^3\) Twin windows which are divided from inside, the height is larger than the width, topped by the arch; was one of the early features of Gothic art. Its form was developed through ages, but it was clearly appeared since the bagging of the Twelfth Century. See: F. A. Paley, *A Manual of Gothic Architecture*, P. 156.
altar. A few stairs lead to the side wooden door of the church. A cornice composed of semicircular units around the upper part of the wall. To the east there is small bell tower with two openings to have copper bells topped by a cross (Fig. 3).

**Narthex:** (Pl. 9) Behind the main entrance on the western side, there is a wooden rectangle narthex, which has two recesses; one to the south, the other is to the east leads to the nave. On its middle, there is a balcony, which consists of two parts, the back part 6.90 m. length and the frontal 3.90 m. length. It is surrounded with a marble handrail with openings. It is supported with six cylindrical columns with capitals decorated with acanthus leaves. A spiral staircase made out of metal is located to the north of the balcony for ascending. (Pl. 10). On both sides of the balcony there are two confessional chairs. There are made out of wood.

The balcony is topped by a large pointed arch and a rose glass window, while the lower part, a textile painting placed 2 m. wide, 3 m. high. It was dedicated by Father Emmanuel Makin to the church in occasion of its Centennial Feast for four years ago. It is bordered by a decorative frame, represents the life of *St. Anthony*, and his miracles. It consists of nine themes; the central theme, and the other eight themes (Pl. 11).

The central part represents St. Anthony receives the child Jesus. Then the themes arranged in right part from the top as; St. Anthony distributes bread to the poor, St .Anthony reconciles a couple quarreling, St. Anthony brings lost things, and St. Anthony exhorts the fish instead of people who rejected it.

Left part from the top; St. Anthony returns the life to died child immortally in boiling water, and his mother begged St. Anthony to revive him. Beside it, Repentance of a person by St. Anthony, left part from the bottom: St. Anthony returns the amputated leg to a boy, who beaten by his mother, and confessed to the Saint Anthony who told him that " the leg which struck the mother must be cut off ", and the boy cut off his leg, but the mother went to the Saint and told him that she had forgiven him.

beside it, the mule prostrates to the Eucharist; some people did not believe, so St. Anthony said to them " I have spoken to you the contrary to what you say" he made the mule
fast for three days after the Saint kept the Eucharist, and placed it for the mule to eat, but refused and prostrated to the Eucharist.¹

**Nave** (Fig. 4): The nave is the main congregational area about 13 m. long. There are no side aisles. Walls of southern and northern sides (Pl. 12), each wall has pointed arches separated each other with a built-in pillars plain from the front, has two small cylindrical columns on both sides with a semicircular base, ends with a capital decorated with Lilly flowers.² Capitals of marble columns are decorated with a head of an angel head in the center (Pl. 13).³ Twin windows topped by lunars are also decorating the walls. There are two rows of wooden seats in the nave for men, and women.

The ceiling is vaulted plain of decorations. This was one of the characteristic features of Gothic style of Architecture. Also there are new paintings of the Jesus crucifixion stages; seven paintings on each wall.

**Altars:**

There are three altars; two in the southern and northern sides of the nave, and the third is inside the main sanctuary lies on the most eastern side.

1. **St. Rita Altar,** is placed in the southern wall of the nave, originally was called Jesus Heart’s altar (Pl.14), and had a paint of Jesus Heart, this paint is replaced with the painting of St. Rita now.⁴

St. Rita’ altar is topped by a decorative pointed arch in the wall made out of cement covered with plaster layer, decorated with floral designs (Pl.15). A cross in the middle of the arch has angel faces on both sides. A rectangular portrait represents St. Rita is wearing a black

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¹ For information about the miracles of St. Anthony of Padua see; C. M. Antony, *Saint Antony of Padua; the Miracle-Worker 1195-1231*, New York, 1913.

² It is one of the well-known symbols refers to purity and chastity. It is largely found in the annunciation pictures and it relates to St. Joseph. See: Clara Erskine Clement, *A Hand Book of Christian Symbols and Stories of the Saints*, Ticknor and company, Boston, 1886, P. 6.

³ One of the principles of the pointed arches and windows is the hood-moulding. It terminates on each side of the arch. It was decorated with heads of animals, a ball-flowers, and shields. See: F. A. Paley, *A Manual of Gothic Architecture*, P. 176.

⁴ Saint Rita of Cascia was an Italian nun. She was born in Rocca Porrena, a village near Cascia; which is located about seventy-five miles of the City of Rome. She was born in 1381 and died in year of 1481 AD. She was venerated as a saint in Roman Catholic Church. Her feast is celebrated annually on twenty two of May. For more information See: Joseph Scardo, O. S. A., *Life of Sister St. Rita of Cascia*, Translated by Dan J. Murophy, D. B. Hansen& Sons Publishers, Chicago, 1916.
robe with a white scarf on her head, she is praying in front of Jesus on the cross, putting her hands on her chest. An angel wearing her crown of thorns is in the back side.

The lower part (Pl. 16): the floor is higher than the nave by two steps; it includes a marble altar of two steps without decorations. In its upper midst there is the House of the Eucharist. It is made of marble with a cooper door is decorated with the Holy Cup. A rectangle marble table is adjacent to box of Eucharist. It is supported with four cylindrical columns with square bases, and floral capitals. Behind the table there are three floral forms representing the Cross. The lower part of this altar is covered with a layer of wood to protect it from damage.

2. **Virgin Lady of Rosary’ altar** (Pl. 17) is located in the northern wall of the nave, this altar is original, dated back to the construction date of the church. It is dedicated to the Holy Virgin Lady of the Rosary. It is similar to the southern altar placed inside a semicircular arch.\(^1\)

The upper part; there is a rectangle wooden portrait, painted in oil, surrounded with a pointed arch. A central cross is decorated with floral decorations. The portrait is flanked with built-in two pillars, ends with angels heads, it represents the Holy Virgin Mary is seated and wearing a red robe and another upper blue one, her head is surrounded with a halo of light of twelve stars, represent the twelve apostles.

She holds the infant Jesus. On the right side St. Dominic\(^2\) kneeling on his knee, receiving the Rosary from the Christ and St. Cathrine. She is kneeling on her knees, receiving the Rosary from the Holy Virgin. She is wearing the white robe, under a black one.\(^3\) The lower part is identical to the southern altar, made out of marble, higher than the floor of the nave by two steps, and includes the House of the Eucharist in the center.

**Two niches** are placed in the southern and northern sides facing the nave. The southern one contains St. Theresa Statue, while the northern contains virgin of lord Statue.

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1. The Rosary is a liturgical prayer that consists of seven groupes, each group has three beeds, has a cross icon, or a big beed from which recitation begins. For more information see; The Roman Catholic Church celebrates annually on seven of October by the feast of lady of the Holy Rosary. See: Franz Michel William, *The Rosary its History and Meaning*, Translated by Edwin Kaiser, Benziger Brothers publishers, New York 1952, PP. 1-3.

2. St. Dominic was born in 1170 AD. in the city of Calargo, Spain. He was born to a family of saints. He was the founder of Dominican order. He was died in 6 of August 1221 AD. See: J. S. Alemany, D. D., *The Life Of St. Dominic and A Sketch of the Dominican Order*, P. O’ Shea Publisher, New York, 1867, PP. 1-225.

3. In art the Holy Virgin Mary is connected with Rosary in different ways. The first she present the rosary to St. Dominic or St. Cathrine of Sinai. Also, she preset it to representatives of different classes. In other paintings groups of Christians are gathering and holding rosaries in front of the Holy Virgin. Franz William, *The Rosary its History and Meaning*, PP. 147-149.
The southern niche is dedicated to St. Theresa\(^1\) (2.25 m. high) (Pl. 18). It is located to the southern side of the main sanctuary. It is a recess in the wall with a glass door. It is similar to the main façade of the church, flanked with a built-in rectangle pillar on each side with square base, and a capital of an angel head. It is topped with an architrave that supports the semi-pointed arch, on that arch there are three towers, the central one has a triangle top, while the other two; each consists of three storeis are separated with a small an architrave, topped with triangle end, between these towers, there are three blind recesses.

This niche is flanked with a bundle of built-in columns each of four columns ends with one capital is decorated with lilly flowers. The niche contains a statue of St. Theresa standing. She wears Franciscan dress, holds the Cross with her left hand refers to the pains, and she holds lilly flowers with her right hand refers to Purity, Holiness, and blessings of Heaven.

Northern niche (2.25 m. high) (Pl. 19) is located on the northern corner before the main sanctuary. It is similar to the southern one. Inside the niche there is a statue of the Holy Virgin Mary standing and wearing a white robe surrounded by blue belt with golden ends. On her right hand is a Rosary ends with a cross. The Holy Virgin is in praying position.

Handrail: Three steps higher than the nave there is a handrail that separates the main sanctuary from the nave. It is about 1.70 m. high. It is made out of marble, consists of two wings; each one is decorated with eight what so called Baramk resembles domes. In the center there is a small copper door (Pl. 20), with two wings decorated with floral shapes, angel faces, and a circle in the center has an inscription in Latin means “Jesus The Savior”. On both sides of the sanctuary entrance on the Handrail, there are two lamps made out of copper refers to the Holy Eucharist.

The Main sanctuary (Pl. 21, Fig. 5) is venerated to St. Anthony of Padua. It is about 6 m. wide and 6.10 m long. It is the located in the eastern side topped with the main dome which is polygon in shape, has a hole in the center like the sun rays. It has ten rays refers to Jesus as the sun who lights the world. Under the dome there are seven pointed arches (Pl. 22).

The columns of the main sanctuary are different from the columns of the nave, and the Balcony; they are eight bundles each consists of three built-in cylindrical columns with square

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\(^1\) Saint Therese of Lisieux was born in January 1873 in Alecon, France. Her parents were pious Catholic. The family moved to the City of Lisieux after the death of St. Therese mother. She joined the convent at the age of fifteen years. She was died at the age of twenty-four, at the end of September 1897. See: Sophia Lucia Deboick, *Image, Authenticity and the cult of Saint Therese of Lisieux, 1897-1959*, Ph. D Thesis, Liverpool University, 2011, P. 6.
bases, Capitals are composite, support the arches decorated with Lilly flowers symbol of Purity, and Holiness.

**Side chambers**, on the southern side of the altar there is a small door leads to a side room of clothes, also to receive the offerings from people. On the northern side there is another small door leads to a room which has the objects of the church.

This sanctuary is simimilar to the other sanctuaries in the nave, made out of wood with a glass door. There is a statue of St. Anthony is standing is wearing Franciscan robe with the three knots belt, and haircut of Franciscan. He is carrying Jesus the Infant, and the Gospel. A portrait of St. Clara,\(^1\) the student of St. Francis, made out of linen hanged to the right side of the statue. Father Emmanuel Makin dadicated it to the church in 2007AD, is wearing the Franciscan wear biege robe, on it a black one, holds the Gospel in her left hand, and in the right hand she holds Lilly flower.

A portrait of St. Francis, is hanged to the left side. He is portrayed standing and wearing Franciscan wear, shoeless, austerity refers to a holds the Gospel, this portrait is made out of linen.\(^2\)

A marble Altar lies in the middle of the sanctuary. Originally, it was attached to the eastern wall, later it was separated from the wall, to be placed in the center of the sanctuary. It is made out of marble, rectangle in shape, is supported with two polygon pillars with square bases. In front of the altar there is a Sickle made out of wood. It is for reading the Gospel during the prayrs.

\(^1\)Saint Clara was born in 1193/ 1194 in the city of Assisi, Italy. She followed Francis and his community in 1212 AD. She was died in 11 August 1253 AD. See: Mareike Gerundt, Markus Warode, *How Saint Clare of Assisi Guided Her Sisters*, Competence Center for Christian Spirituality, Germany, 6 November 2018, P. 2

\(^2\)Francis Al Assisi was one of the most popular saints from the Middle Ages till now. Tourists and pilgrims are come from everywhere to visit his tomb in Umbria town. He was born in 1181 or 1182 and died in 1226 AD. He called himself “a lesser brother”. After his death a lot of his friars traveled to spread his way of worship. St. Francis Al Assisi has visited the Ayyubid king El Kamel in 1217 AD. He asked to visit the Holy Land and to spread their message in Egypt. Following this date, they started to build churches, hospitals, and schools in Egypt. Their first church was in Luxor. See: Lawrence S. Cunningham, *A Brief History of Saints*, Blackwell Publishing, 2005, P. 39.
Conclusion:

- St. Anthony church is characterized by its simple architectural style, without side aisles. The church has two entrances, the main one is on the western side and the other is on the south. There is no Choir. The church has three altars, for St. Anthony in the main sanctuary and the other two are placed in the nave. It has a balcony for the coral of the church. There is only a bell tower with two copper bells. The roof of the church is vaulted plain of decorations.

- The main western façade are built and decorated according to Gothic Style, such as, rose windows above the main entrance, twin windows on both sides, and a pointed arched entrance.

- There are two Confissional Chairs made out of wood, they are movable; one is on the right hand-side of the balcony, while the other is on the left. They are for people who wanted to repent. Each has a small window with a curtain, it has a chair inside for the monk who listen to the person from outside without seeing him.

- There is no Pulpit, but there is a Sickle, located in the main altar. It is rectangle in shape. It is made out of wood. It is used for reading the Gospel.

- The Handrail is used to separate the main sanctuary from the nave instead of the iconostasis.

- There are two side chambers, one is for the church objects, the other is the Sacrista.

- Using acanthus capitals of the columns. It refers to the crown of Jesus Christ and one of the most important Roman botanical elements, from which the forms of corns and corrugated veins are derived. Later, the acanthus leaves capitals were flourished in the Hellenistic period.

- The use of portraits is generally regarded by Franciscan Catholics as European style. Portrait of saints usually hold the Lilly flower, which is a white flower, refers to the Purity, and Holiness.

- Using the bundles of columns, derived from ancient Egyptian temples. They are built-in, each bundle consists of three columns with crowns are decorated with Lilly Flowers, and standing on square bases, that is appearing in the entrance of the main altar. In the nave there are built-in pillars with frontal rectangle parts, flanked with small cylindrical parts, topped with capitals are decorated with acanthus leaves and an angel head, about the columns of the balcony; they are cylindrical columns, with capitals are decorated with acanthus leaves.

- On the main altar there are the ceremonial eucharistic vessels, which are placed only during the rituals. The Cup is without a chair because the cup chair is not found in the Latin Ritual but in the Coptic ritual only, and the tray and the seven scrolls are two large and five small and many...
colors (green, blue, red, black, and white) depending on the ritual and holidays: For example, black color is used in sad occasions such as death and this is rarely used, white is used in Christmas, the green used in the current time, and the blue used in the forty days Fast.

- The main dome covers the main sanctuary is ribbbed with a hole on the top, like the sun sends its rays to the world that refers to the Christ, who lights the world after the darkness. Under the main dome there are seven pointed arches, number seven refers to the Perfect.
- Using the twin windows topped with lunars for illumination, and ventilation.
- There is a small marble basin for blessed water is located in the southern wall near the main door.
- Using Tau Cross decoration in the main door is the symbol of the Franciscans.
- There is a copper Lamps consists of small lamps. They are decorated with copper flowers, and leaves. These lamps dated back to the church date of construction.
- The Church celebrates annually on June 13, the day of St. Anthony’ death.
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عمانويل ماكن، البابيل المنوئي لكنيسة القديس انطونيوس البدوانى، 2015 م، القاهرة، ص 18.

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