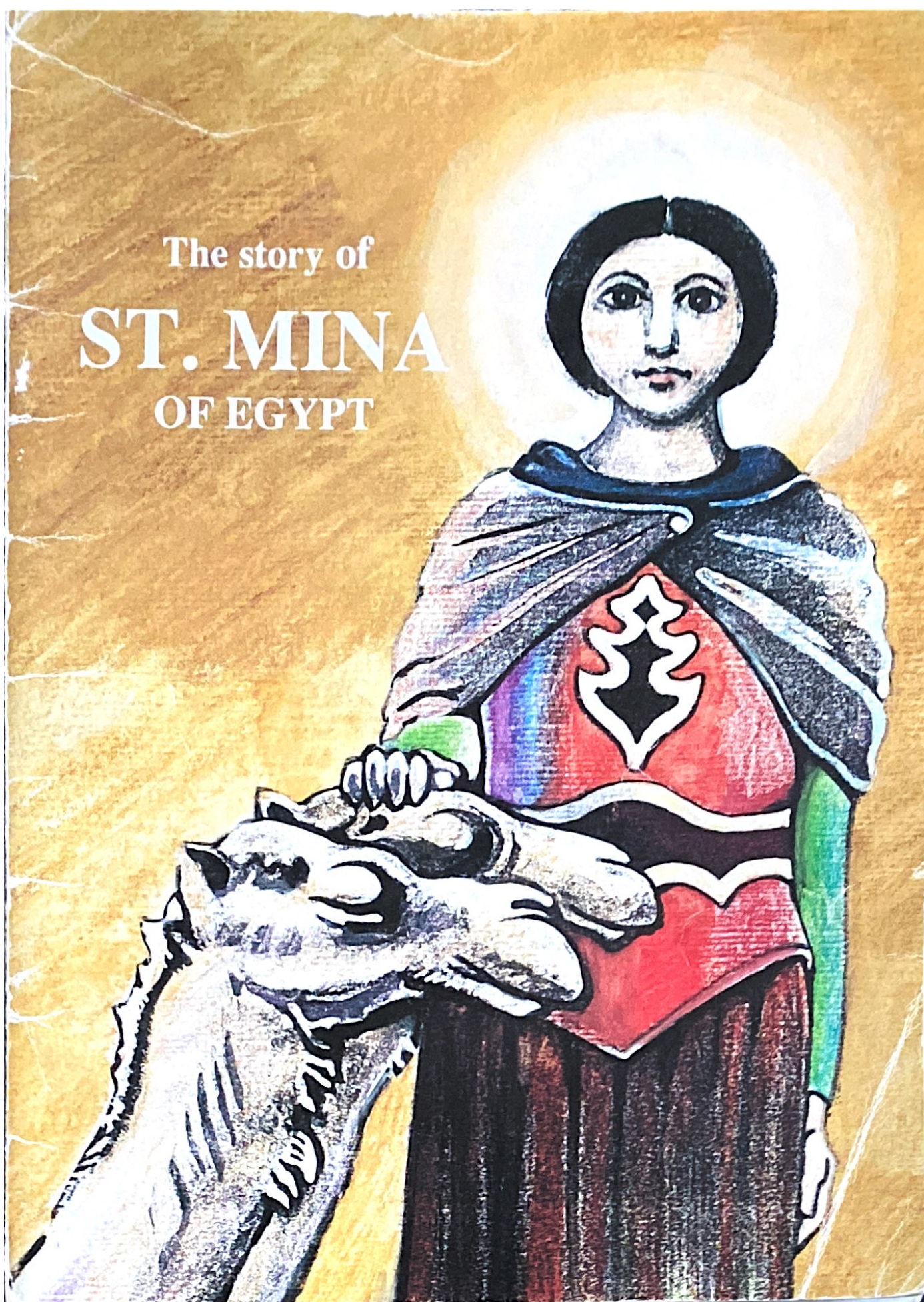


The story of  
**ST. MINA**  
OF EGYPT



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**Retold and Illustrated by**

**MICHAEL GIBRAEL**

**Third edition**

**PUBLISHED BY COPTIC ORTHODOX PUBLICATION & TRANSLATION**  
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**SYDNEY 1994**

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I  
Euphemiya was the wife of a man of authority and nobility - but she was sad! She wanted a child.

She prayed and fasted for many years that God may give her a child, but she was barren and old!

While everybody in her town was enjoying the feast of St. Mary, Euphemiya could not bear to look at the happy mothers carrying their children, because she remembered her barrenness.

She made her way to church to seek comfort and to ask the Lord again to answer her plea.

As she stood before the altar with tears streaming down her face, she dipped her finger in the oil vessel underneath the icon of St. Mary carrying the baby Jesus, and asked from all her heart for a child to fill her life.

Wondrously, she heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Amen".

Sure enough, nine months later, in the year 285 AD, Euphemiya gave birth to a beautiful baby boy.

The family gathered to name the baby, and it was suggested that he should have the name of his grandfather, but Euphemiya insisted on calling him 'Mina' - an ancient Egyptian name that sounded like 'Amen' - the word she heard when the Lord promised her a child.



Mina was brought up in a Christian home and was given a good schooling and taught the virtues of Christian life. Since he began to read, Mina loved to read the Holy Scriptures. He went to church regularly and was very keen to serve the Lord.

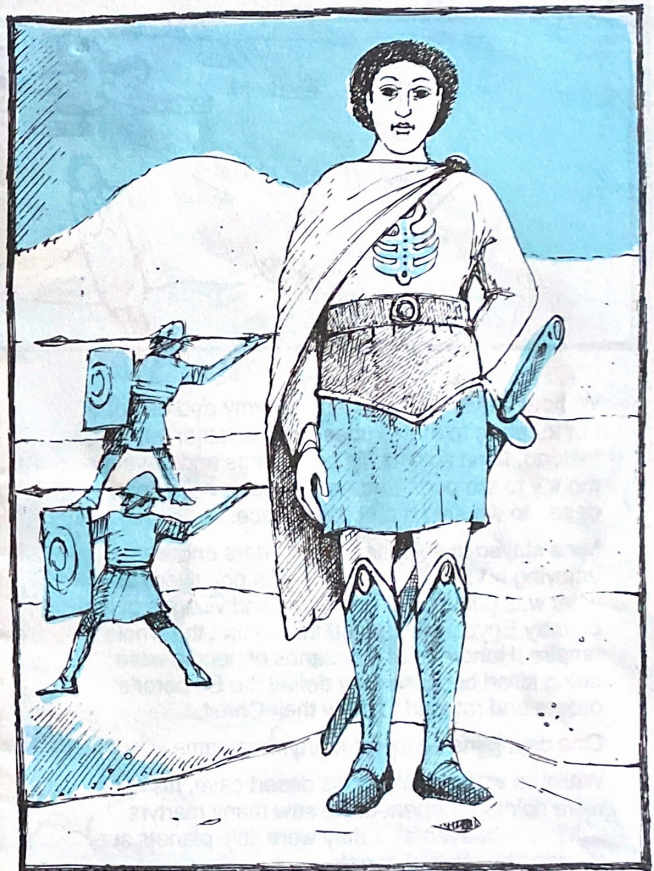
His father died when he was only eleven and his mother died only three years later. His relatives thought that two such blows would ruin his spirit, but the opposite happened, Mina was a young man full of faith!

Mina became a wealthy young man of noble birth, his father left him a lot of money and possessions. At the age of fifteen, Mina joined the army in answer to the Emperor's command.

While serving in the army, Mina earned the reputation of being the bravest and brightest soldier in his regiment.

Because he showed good leadership, he was promoted quickly through the army ranks until he became second only to Fermyanos, the chief of staff of the whole army. And while the future looked bright and promising, something came to disturb his happiness, the Emperor Diocletian issued a decree commanding all his subjects, especially those in the army, to worship his gods.

Mina had to choose between obeying the Emperor and renouncing his faith or leaving the army and ruining his successful career...





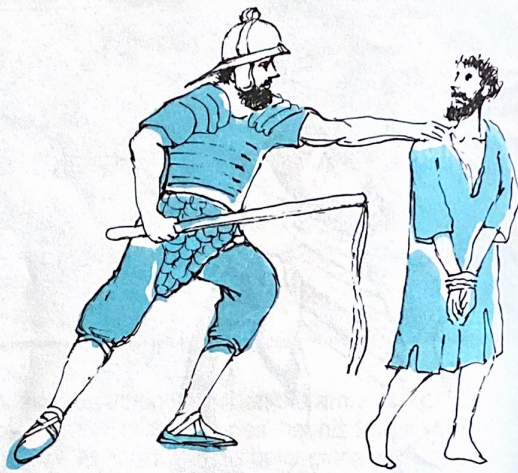
Without hesitation Mina left the army and decided not to return to the luxuries that his father left him. Instead, Mina sold all his belongings and gave the money to the poor, and headed for a new life in the desert to worship the Lord in peace.

Mina stayed in solitude for five years and was enjoying his life with God. He was not aware of what was going on in the towns and villages of his country Egypt, and indeed throughout the whole empire. Hundreds of thousands of people were being killed because they defied the Emperor's orders and refused to deny their Christ.

One day, Mina's turn for martyrdom came...

While he was praying in his desert cave, his eyes were spiritually opened. He saw many martyrs shining in heaven as if they were little planets surrounded by stars of angels.





Mina wanted to be one of them, but how?

It was revealed to him that in the towns, proclaiming the Christian faith meant death!

Again without hesitation, he made his way to town proclaiming his faith and strengthening Christians.

He was caught and tortured, but he never stopped proclaiming his Christianity until his last breath.

The endless sufferings and tortures he went through with courage and faith attracted many pagans to Christianity, even to martyrdom.

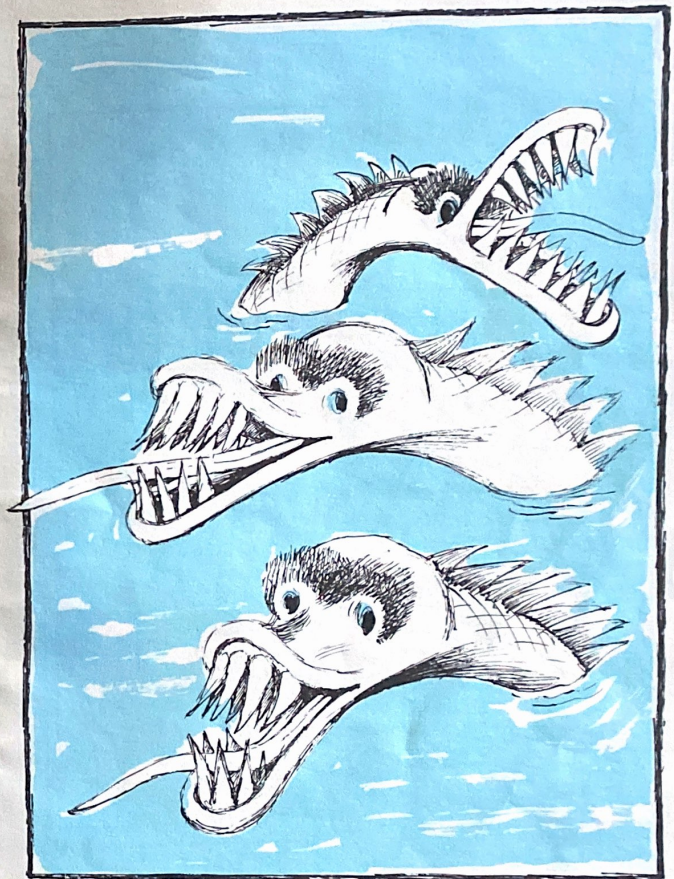


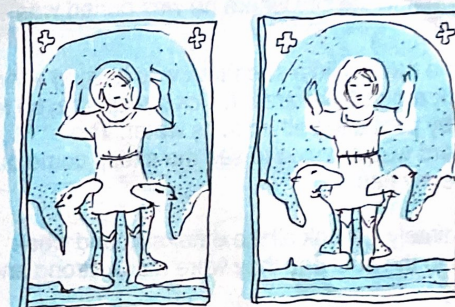
II

Many years later, a Christian army led by a brave captain called Athanasius, prepared to go to Maryout near Alexandria to defend its Christian dwellers against the endless attacks of the Berber tribes of North Africa. They decided to take with them the relics of St. Mina as a blessing and protection in battle.

After they set sail from Alexandria, in the middle of a storm, they were attacked by huge sea monsters. The terrified soldiers saw animals that had long necks and elongated faces which resembled camels. While they prayed for protection, fiery arrows leapt from St. Mina's relics towards the strange beasts and made them disappear in the water immediately. The soldiers were thankful and were encouraged for the battle to come.

They made their way into the desert to meet the Berber for a decisive and triumphant battle.





After achieving victory, the soldiers thanked the Lord of St. Mina for blessing them and protecting them, and began packing to go home. But the camel carrying the relics of St. Mina refused to move. They tried another camel, then another and another, but none of the camels moved. Then Captain Athanasius realised that God wanted the body of the saint to remain in that place. So he ordered the relics to be buried in that area and that a painting of St. Mina be made on a timber board showing at his feet the camel-like beasts that they encountered at sea.

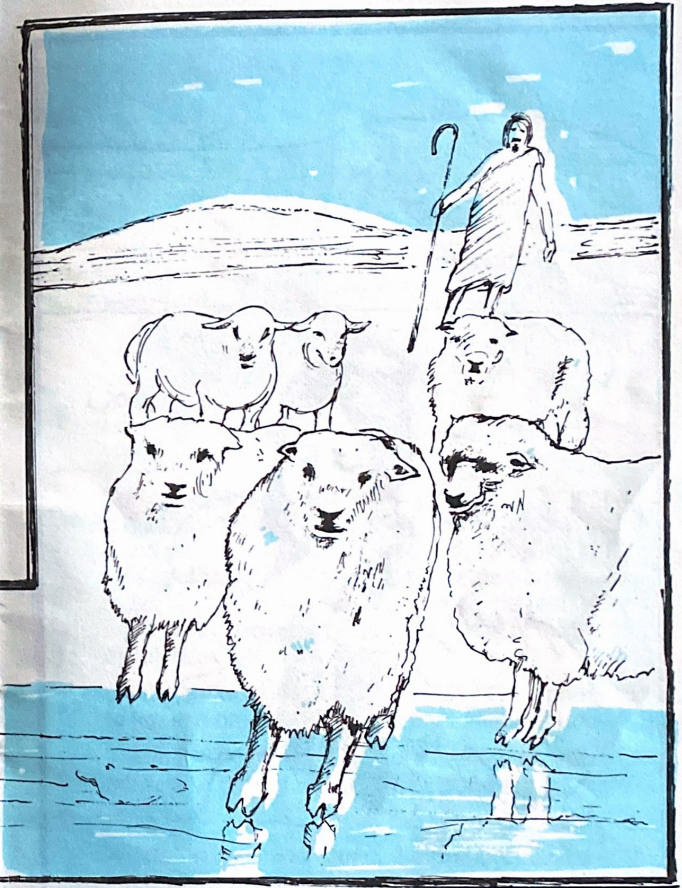
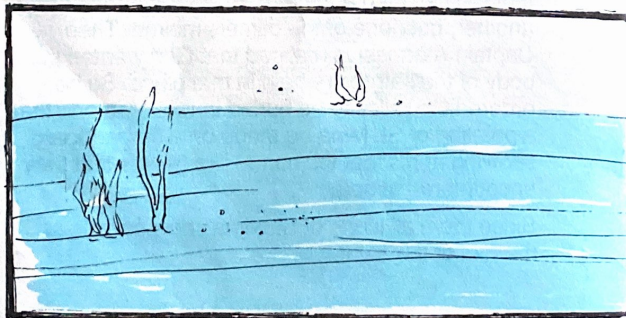
Since then, all icons of St. Mina show camels at the feet of the saint.

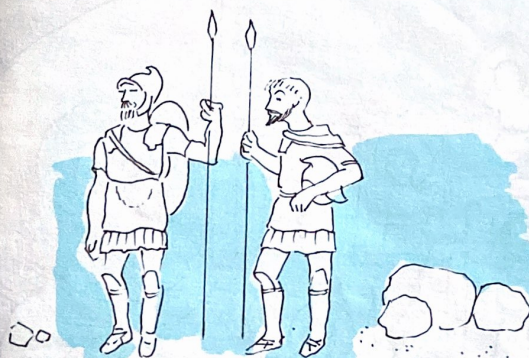
Many years passed and the body of St. Mina was forgotten and the site where he was buried was lost.

Until one day, while a shepherd was looking after his flock around that area, a sick sheep strayed to a nearby pool and bathed in its water. The shepherd was amazed to see the sheep come out completely healed.

Immediately he took all the other sick and weak sheep to the pool and they were made strong and healthy.

The shepherd announced the news of the miracle in all the nearby towns and villages, and in a short time thousands of people came to that holy pool to be healed.





One such person was the daughter of the Emperor Arcadius, who was a leper. She came full of faith along with soldiers and guards and, following the advice of the shepherds, she fully emersed herself in the water, and she was completely healed. How happy and joyous she was to be cured of that awful disease!

On the same night as she slept, St. Mina appeared to her in a dream, and asked her to find his body.

The following morning, she ordered the guards and soldiers to dig around until they found the saint's body.

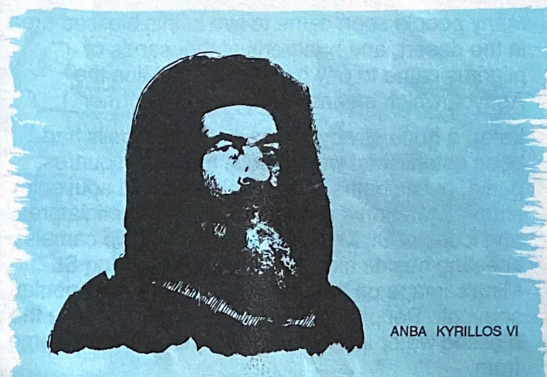
When the body was found, the Emperor built a huge cathedral dedicated to St. Mina on the site.



Many people soon came to live in this blessed area in the desert, and hundreds of thousands of pilgrims came to pay homage to St. Mina the Agaybi, which means 'the miracle performer'.

Later, a huge city by the name Martyropolis had been established with streets, markets, squares, parks, public baths, inns for pilgrims and souvenir shops. Merchants used to sell coloured miniatures and icons of St. Mina with the famous two camels kneeling beside him. Also little jars showing St. Mina's image on both sides were the most popular souvenir. People used to buy these jars to take the blessed water in them back to wherever they came from.





But the city of St. Mina did not last! It was attacked by Bedouins of the desert again and again leaving it completely ruined, turning the site back to what it was before, a desert of wasteland.

Fortunately, St. Mina had a strong friend this century who was determined to bring this area back to its glorious days. This friend was Anba Kyrillos the Sixth. He established a new monastery near the old city of St. Mina, with a new cathedral named after the saint.

Once again visitors go there seeking the blessing of St. Mina. So, if you visit Egypt remember Maryout and its prince, St. Mina the Agaybi.

FATHER TIMOTHY

St. John The Baptist-Miramar, Florida

**The Story of St Mina of Egypt**  
**B00610**

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