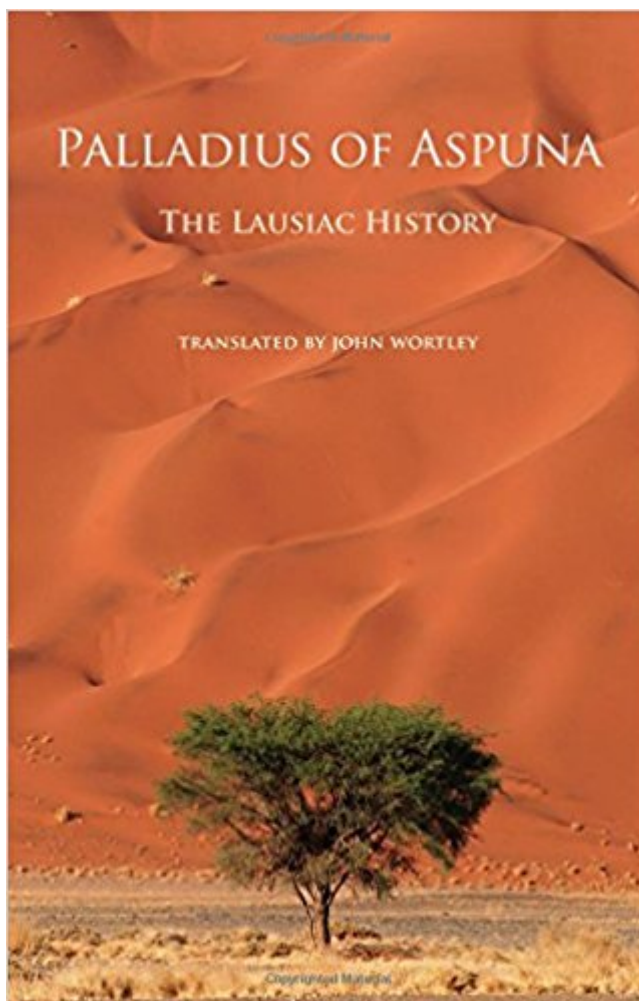


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The Lausiatic History (Cistercian Studies)



Synopsis

Born in Galatia in the 360s, Palladius enrolled as a monk on the Mount of Olives in his early twenties. As a monk, he traveled to Alexandria, the desert of Nitria, the Cells, Palestine, Rome, and the Thebaid. During his travels he encountered Rufinus of Aquileia, Melania the Elder, the hermit Dorotheos, Macarius of Alexandria, Evagrius of Pontus, Jerome of Bethlehem, and John Chrysostom. He wrote this elegant account of his visits to various monastic sites in Egypt toward the end of the fourth century AD for the imperial chamberlain Lausus. It is both the most sophisticated and the most informative of the few documents illustrating the earliest chapter in the history of Christian monasticism. Palladius's work is the only one of the major monastic writings not written for fellow monks to inspire them with models for their emulation but rather for a man very much of the world, with the explicit intention of exerting not only religious but also political influence.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

John Wortley is emeritus professor at the University of Manitoba and an Anglican priest. His previous publications include *The Book of the Elders*, *Paul of Monembasia*, and *The Spiritual Meadow* (all from Cistercian Publications) as well as *Skylitzes's Synopsis of Byzantine History* and *The Anonymous Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, both from Cambridge University Press.

This is rather like a Charles Kuralt tour of the monastic centers of Egypt and beyond in the Fourth

Century. We have quick glimpses of interesting persons in their frantic search for spiritual completion. They are struggling so toward their goal. It is amazing how these unwashed, starved, emaciated persons can be so absolutely dedicated. But did their pursuit make them oblivious to relating to others mainly? We can admire their single-mindedness in their endeavor to draw close to God. Did they miss that he was already with them "every day until all things are complete" Matthew 28:20? There's a delightful story of Abba Pior, coming to his community meeting with a small bag of sand hung around his neck in front and a large one behind on his back. The community was meeting to expel a sinful young brother. Pior's reply to questions about his bags of sand was, " We hold before us the sins of others, but our own larger sins we hide behind our backs." The poor sinner was not expelled, and the brothers dispersed.

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