



APOPHTHEGMATA PATRUM

APOPHTHEGMATA PATRUM (Maxims of the fathers), Graeco-Latin name customarily used to refer to a species of Christian literature consisting of sayings and edifying anecdotes of the monks and solitary ascetics who inhabited the deserts of Egypt during the early centuries of the Christian era. Such stories and sayings circulated widely in Coptic, Greek, Latin, Syriac, and other languages and were often incorporated into homiletic and commentarial works.

A number of *Apophthegmata patrum* are known in Sogdian versions, all of which are likely to derive from Syriac sources. Some of those attested by the manuscript C2 (see Sogdian literature: Christian) are literal translations of texts included in the *Paradise of the fathers* by 'Nānišo', the most important collection of *Apophthegmata* in Syriac. Those known from the manuscript C67 agree in substance but not in wording with stories found in 'Nānišo's *Paradise*, while two further anecdotes occurring in C2 form part of a work by Macarius (q.v.).

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