

same state of inquietude, and sometimes perhaps of danger. Near the close of the sixth century, and during the seventh, the well known monkish writers, Johannes Climacus and Anastasius Sinaita, flourished here. About the middle of the tenth century the monks of Sinai are reported to have all fled for their lives to a mountain called Latrum.¹ In the beginning of the eleventh century, the convent was again in a flourishing state, and was visited by great numbers of pilgrims. At this time the celebrated St. Simeon resided here as a monk; who understood the Egyptian, Syriac, Arabic, Greek, and Latin languages; and who in A. D. 1027 came to Europe and was hospitably entertained by Richard II, duke of Normandy. He brought with him relics of St. Catharine, and collected alms for the convent; but afterwards founded an abbey in France, where he died.² In A. D. 1116, King Baldwin I. of Jerusalem made an excursion to the gulf of 'Akabah, and expressed the intention of visiting Mount Sinai; he was persuaded not to do so by messengers from the monks, in order that they might not by his visit be exposed to suspicion and danger from their Mussulman masters.³

All the circumstances hitherto detailed, seem to render it probable, that from about the beginning of the fourth century onwards a very considerable Christian population existed in the peninsula. The remains of the many convents, chapels, and hermitages, which are still visible in various quarters, go to show the same thing; and add weight to the tradition of the present convent, that at the time of the Muhammedan conquest, six or seven thousand monks and hermits were dispersed over the mountains.⁴ That pilgrimages to these holy spots, so sacred in themselves, and as the abodes of holy men, should then be frequent, was in that age almost a matter of course; and these are continued more or less even to the present day.

With these early pilgrimages the celebrated Sinaitic inscriptions have been supposed to stand in close connection. Several of them have been mentioned above as occurring on our way to Sinai; and they are found on all the routes which lead from the west towards this mountain, as far south as Târ. They extend to the very base of Sinai, above the convent el-Arba'in; but are found neither on Jebel Mûsa, nor on the present Horeb, nor on St. Catharine, nor in the valley of the convent; while on Serbâl they are seen on its very summits. Not one has yet been found to the eastward of Sinai. But the spot where they exist in the

¹ Baronius Annal. A.D. 956, viii.

² See Mabillon Acta Sanctor. Ord. Benedict. Sæc. VI. P. I. p. 874. Ejusd. Annales Ord. St. Benedict. lib. 56. c. 35, 36. Hist. Littéraire de France, Tom. VII. p. 67.

³ Albert. Aq. 12. 22, in Gesta Dei per Francos. Wilken Gesch. der Kreuzzüge, II, p. 403.

⁴ Burckhardt's Travels, etc. p. 546.