

KELLIA

GAME RULES

Abba Sisoës said to a brother:

-How are you?

-I'm wasting my days.

-Even if I end up wasting a day, I give thanks.

In the fourth century after Christ, in a remote area of Egypt, a handful of men and women in search of the absolute move to the desert, on the outskirts of a village.

In this game, each player takes on the role of an *abba* ("father") or *amma* ("mother") who has gone to the desert in search of God. Each of them lives in a *kellion** where they pursue their inner search, involving personal struggles and prayer.

However, this quest is not entirely solitary, for in this unusual way of life, the *ammass* and the *abbas* visit and support each other.

But life in the desert is far from easy! Everyone must ensure their material survival, accept the risks of a hostile place, cultivate the land, and above all, for those who would become the first Christian hermits, fight with their own demons.

Time is running out... even when you waste your days!

**Kellion* (plural *kellia*) is a Greek word meaning a cell, a kind of little house.

Duration
About 50 min



Age
12+



Number of players
2-4



Object of the game

Kellia is a cooperative game: the players all win together or lose together.

The goal of each player is:

- to have food and water every day to survive in the desert
- before the end of the game, to have built their *kellion*, symbol of his or her whole life as *amma* or *abba* (prayer, work, contemplation, food ...)

With two players

Kellia is best played with 3 or 4 players.

For a 2-player game, each player chooses two game tokens: the game is then played as a 4-player game.

Introductory version & full game

There are two sets of rules for this game: **the introductory version** (p. 3) allows you to get familiar with a good part of the rules used in **the full version** (p. 8), which is more strategic and allows for more varied games.

On line

To find out more about the Desert Fathers and Mothers, to read extra notes on the rules of the game, and more, you can look up the pages online at www.taize.fr/kellia

We are grateful to all the young people who helped us to try out versions of Kellia during their visit to Taizé!



Material

Note | In the introductory version, only the material indicated by [square brackets] is used.

19 desert squares



7 resource squares

Each one has a logo.



7 improvements

Each one corresponds to a resource square.



3 building squares



3 obstacle squares

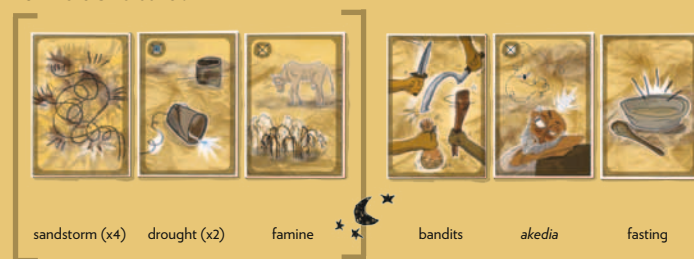


3 pathways

There is a pathway for each obstacle.



10 incident cards



5 character cards

Printed on both sides.

5 kellion cards

Printed on both sides.



Cubes and their meaning

Kellia is played with cubes of different colours:

Food cubes: bread, roots, cactus...

Water cubes: cactus juice, water, oasis...

Work cubes: wood, camel hair...

cubes of **Attention** to nature.

Inner Life cubes.

The cubes are placed in a stock, next to the board. When cubes are to be placed on the board, or when players receive cubes, they are taken from this stock. When cubes are removed from the board, or a player discards cubes, they are returned to the stock.

At the end of each round, each player must discard one **Food** cube and one **Water** cube to survive. Players must also build their **kellion** with several of these cubes to win the game.

INTRODUCTORY VERSION

Setting up the game

To play **the introductory version**, you need (see also the items indicated by [square brackets] on p. 2):

- 14 desert squares
- all resources, except the camel and the cactus
- all improvements, except the camel and cactus
- the well
- 6 incidents: 4 sandstorms, 1 famine, and 1 of the two droughts
- the board, the tokens, the die, and the wooden cubes.

The remaining material can be left in the box.

1| Shuffle and place the following squares face down on the board:



14 desert
squares

the 5 resources

the well

2| Each player chooses a *kellion* and puts the corresponding playing token on it.

3| Each player receives (and puts in front of them):

- 1 **Food** cube
- 1 **Water** cube
- 1 **Inner life** cube



4| Beside the board, put:

the Improvements
(face up)



a pile of 6 Incidents
(face down):

- 4 sandstorms
- 1 famine
- 1 drought.



The **church** is at the centre of the board.

The **calendar** on the edge of the board is not used in the introductory version.



How to play

At the beginning of the game, the players designate an **elder**, who will always play first.

The game is played in 7 rounds, or days.

Each round is played as follows:

I. Daytime: Each player plays his/her actions.

II. Evening: There are several stages:

- Go home, Pray, Eat and drink.
- Incident, New Squares and Cubes for the Morning.



I. The daytime

Each player plays his/her actions. **The elder** begins. When he/she has finished his/her actions, it is the turn of the next player, going round clockwise.

Each player can perform 3 actions during the day, from these 3 possibilities:

- 1 | Moving
- 2 | Contemplating the desert
- 3 | Placing a cube.

When a player has performed 3 actions, they can choose to stop playing, or else to discard an **Inner Life** cube in order to gain 3 new actions. He or she can do this several times a day.

1 | Moving



For an action, a player may **move their token one square**, following the lines on the board.

When they reach a square that is face down, the player turns it over.



If it is a resource square or the well, the cubes indicated are placed on it.

The player can then **immediately collect all or some these cubes**.

Also, if a player arrives on a square that is face up where there are cubes already, they can immediately collect them.



Important!

Each player may **never have more than 7 cubes**, regardless of colour.

Moreover, **throwing cubes away is not allowed**.

Life in the desert is a life of simplicity and austerity, and certainly not of waste!

When a player moves to the same square as another player, they can freely give cubes to each other.

However, it is never possible to give **Inner life** cubes to each other.



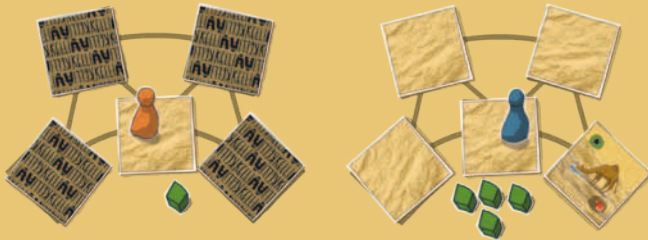
Note | Collecting cubes or giving cubes to each other does not count as an action.

2 | Contemplating the desert

By taking the time to contemplate the great desert spaces, the *abbas* and *ammas* become more sensitive to the environment in which they live.

For one action, a player on a desert square can contemplate the desert.

He/she then receives 1 **Attention** cube, + 1 further **Attention** cube for each visible desert square around him/her.



A contemplates the desert and receives 1 **Attention** cube.

B contemplates the desert and receives 4 **Attention** cubes.

Note | You can decide to take only some of the **Attention** cubes that you are entitled to receive.

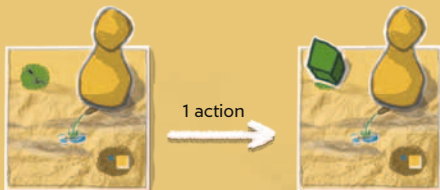
3 | Placing a cube

For an action, a player may place one of their cubes on the square he or she is on.

This action can take two forms:

a | Taking care of a resource square

The player takes care of the resource square he/she is on by placing 1 **Attention** cube on the green logo of this square.



At the end of the day, a square which has been taken care of is **covered by its improvement**, which produces more cubes (see part II. *Evening and night-time*).



Note | On each Resource Square, the little cubes indicate what this square will produce once improved.



b | Building the *kellion*

When a player is in his or her *kellion*, he or she can use one of their cubes for building the *kellion*, following the colours needed.



In the above example, the player needs only one more **Inner life** cube to finish his/her *kellion*.

Notes

- Once a cube has been placed, it cannot be collected anymore.
- You can visit the *kellion* of another player, but **you cannot build the *kellion* of someone else.**

In times of need: the church

Someone who is having trouble finding something to survive can beg at the church: there they will find other *ammas* and *abbas* who have been in the desert longer than he/she has, and who are willing to help.

When moving at the church, a player can choose to beg: **if they do not have enough to survive, the church can give them only one of the cubes they lack (Food or Water).**

Their turn is then immediately finished, even if they have actions or **Inner Life** cubes left. The only thing they can still do is exchange cubes with other players.



Notes

- You can move to the church without begging.
- Moving to the church counts as an action, but begging is not an additional action.
- If you go to the church to beg, **begging must be the first thing** you do there. You can exchange cubes after begging, but not just before!

Tips for the daytime

- In the first few rounds, don't hesitate to discard **Inner Life** cubes to explore the desert.
- Do not wait until the last rounds to build your *kellia*.

II. Evening and night-time

When all the players have finished their actions, it is **evening**.

The elder then announces the different stages, which everyone performs at the same time.

1 | Go home

Each player moves their token to their *kellion*.

2 | Pray

The *ammās* and *abbas* end each of their days with prayer. Their praise is also nourished by what they have contemplated during the day.

During the prayer, each player receives 1 **Inner Life** cube. During the prayer, 3 **Attention** cubes can also be exchanged for an additional **Inner Life** cube (once per prayer).

Reminder | A player may **never have more than 7 cubes**. If he/she has 7 cubes already at prayer time, he/she does not receive the **Inner Life** cube.



A receives 1 **Inner Life** cube.



B receives 1 **Inner Life** cube and exchanges 3 **Attention** cubes for 1 **Inner Life** cube.



C already has 7 cubes, and so receives nothing.



D has 7 cubes, but exchanges 3 **Attention** cubes for 1 **Inner Life** cube. He/she then has space also to receive their normal **Inner Life** cube.

3 | Eat and drink

Time for the meal! Each player must discard 1 **Food** cube and 1 **Water** cube.

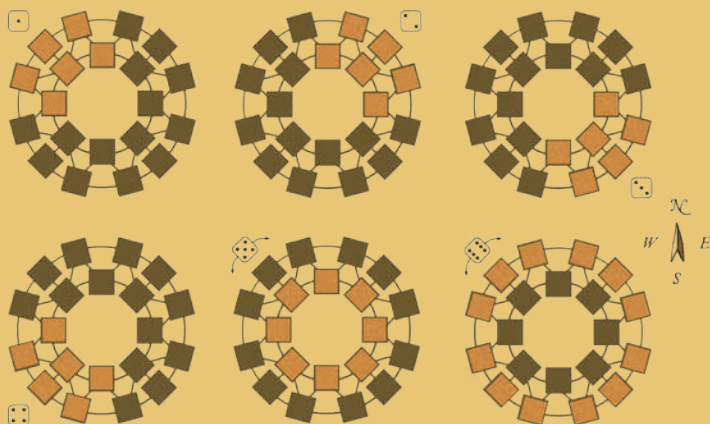
If anyone does not have these 2 cubes at this point, everybody immediately loses the game!

Then it is **night**, and the beginning of a new day.

Before the day begins, two more steps are taken:

4 | Night-time incidents

Throw the die to know which part of the desert is affected.



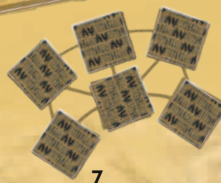
Then take an **incident card** from the top of the pile. There are 3 possible incidents:

a | Famine and b | Drought

In the area concerned, remove all cubes of the indicated colour. **No cubes of this colour will appear there until the end of the day.**

c | Sandstorm

In the area concerned, remove all the squares, all the cubes, all the improvements... Everything has to be started all over again! Shuffle the removed squares, without looking at them, and put them back face down. These squares can be turned over again when visited during the day.



7

5 | Squares and Cubes for the Morning

Each resource square that has been taken care of (see *Placing a cube*, p. 5) is improved: remove the **Attention** cube, and **cover the resource square with its improvement square**.



New cubes are then added to the squares that produce cubes: do this so as to complete what is indicated on each square.



Note | When you add new cubes, don't forget to take into account the incident that took place.

When all of these steps are done, start a new day (see *I. The day-time*).

End of the game

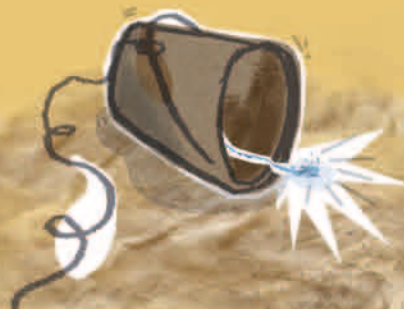
All players win if in the evening everyone has finished building their *kellion* and all have enough to survive (1 **Food** cube and 1 **Water** cube).

If in the evening at mealtime any of the players does not have the two cubes needed to survive, **the game is immediately lost**.

When **the last incident card** is drawn, there is **one last day** for the players to finish their *kellion* (while finding something to survive).

At the end of this last day:

- if one of the *kellia* is not finished, **the game is lost**;
- if all the *kellia* are finished, and all the players have enough to survive, **they win the game... by the skin of their teeth!**



FULL VERSION

A brother said to Abba Theodore,

- Speak a word to me, for I am perishing.

- I am in danger myself... so what could I say to you?

This set of rules gives the changes you need to make to the introductory version to integrate all the elements of the game. You need to have read and understood the rules of the discovery version first.

Character cards

Each *amma* and *abba* is special, with their own strengths, weaknesses and their personal way of living in the desert.

Each player chooses a character card with a special ability and the *kellion* to build that corresponds to it.

Some of these abilities refer to things that are explained on the following pages.

Amma Melania the Elder



She was a great traveller all her life. Born in Hispania, she moved to Rome to marry her husband. Having become a widow very young, she set out for Alexandria to meet the *abbas* and *ammass* there. It was said that she walked through the entire desert from one end to the other. Finally, she settled at Jerusalem, where she founded a community of women.

She can perform **one extra action** each day. (An *Inner Life* cube still only lets her perform 3 more actions.)



Abba Serapion the Sindonite



It is said that Serapion could not stay under a roof: he moved around and lived in the open.

He can decide **not to come home in the evening** (to his *kellion* or to the church), and to stay on the square where he is. If any cubes appear there, he can collect them straight away. If he is on an Obstacle square, he can leave it in the morning in any direction he likes. If there is a sandstorm, the procedure is as usual, and then the square where he is turned face up, as though he had just moved there. On Saturday evening, if he does not go to the church, he cannot participate in the meal together.

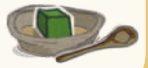


Abba Agathon of Egypt



He went to live in a cave and found that it was also the home of a large snake. Since he did not want to chase it away, they became friends, and they used to go together to drink sap from a sycamore tree nearby.

To survive, he needs only one **Attention** cube. He begins the game with one **Attention** cube and an *Inner Life* cube. He can beg for this **Attention** cube. During the fast, he still has to discard one **Attention** cube.



Amma Syncletica of Alexandria



Known for her great wisdom, many *abbas* and *ammass* came to visit her. She gathered around her a group of women who wanted to learn from her experience of life.

When it is her turn she can **exchange cubes with players who are on squares next to where she is**. As with normal exchanges, this does not count as an action.



Amma Sara of the Desert



She was known for her strong personality, which was impulsive and very reactive, in everyday matters as well as in the spiritual struggle. It is said that the words she spoke came true immediately.

She can possess up to **10 cubes**, instead of only 7.



Amma Alexandra



She was said to have a very great capacity to work. She could spend the entire day weaving linen as she prayed, without stopping, from dawn to evening.

For one action, she can exchange 2 **Work** cubes for 2 **Food** cubes or 2 **Water** cubes.



Amma Talida



She lived in a community of women of which she was the spiritual mother. Many people wanted to meet her to listen to her edifying words.

When she is on the same square as another player, she can **give him/her a word**. This counts as **one action**. The other player then receives an *Inner Life* cube. She can do this only once per player each day.



Abba Paulos of Thebes



Every day, a raven used to bring him half a loaf of bread to live on. One day, when another *abba* was there visiting him, the raven brought a whole loaf of bread for them to share.

Once during the day, even if it is not his turn, he can send his raven to bring one of his **Work cubes or **Food** cubes to another player.** (This does not count as an action.)



Abba Bessarion of Egypt



Bessarion was a great man of prayer. It is said that he spent 40 nights in prayer without sleeping. It was even told that in response to his prayer, seawater was changed into fresh water for one of his disciples who was thirsty.

At the end of the prayer, just before the meal, he can pray for one player who needs a **Water** cube in order to survive. The player receives the **Water** cube he or she needs. Every evening, he can only pray in this way for one player. On Saturday evenings, Bessarion's prayer takes place before the meal together



Abba Helenus



One day, he went on a journey. A donkey that he had befriended carried his baggage. When they reached the banks of the Nile, the donkey was scared; and Helenus asked a crocodile to help them cross over. The crocodile, which had previously devoured many people, helped them across willingly.

He has no problem with obstacles: he can go across them even without a pathway.



5 | Next to the board, place:



the unused desert squares



improvements, buildings, and pathways (face up)

3 of the 4 other resources (face down) – the last resource goes back in the box.

6 | Put a token on the starting square of the chosen difficulty level (for example, here to start a normal game).

7 | Shuffle the incident cards and put them under the edge of the board, facing down, starting on the first day of the calendar after the token.

Setting up the game

The complete version can be played at 3 levels of difficulty:

★ Easy ★ ★ Normal ★ ★ ★ Difficult.

The number of incidents used depends on the level chosen (see p. 10).

1 | Each player places **the kellion card of his/her character** with the token of the corresponding colour on top of it.

2 | Put a **desert square face up** in front of each **kellion**.

3 | Each player receives (and puts in front of them) :

1 **Food** cube, 1 **Water** cube, 1 **Inner life** cube.



4 | Shuffle and place the following squares face down on the remaining squares of the board:



10 desert squares



3 random resources



the 3 obstacles squares.



Each corner of the board represents **the end of a week**. On the night from Saturday to Sunday, the *abbas* and the *ammās* meet in the church (see p. 10-11).

How to play

Game duration

The number of incidents to be prepared depends on the difficulty level chosen.

	Easy ★	Normal ★★	Difficult ★★★
Sandstorm	4	4	3
Famine	1	1	1
Drought	2	1	1
Bandits	1	1	1
Fasting	1	1	1
Akedia	1	1	1
Total	10	9	8
Number of days before the end	11	10	9

At difficult level, there are two further possibilities.

- **Expert:** replace the fasting card by a sandstorm card.
- **Random:** use an extra sandstorm card, shuffle all the incident cards, and remove one of them without looking at it.

Obstacles

When a player moves onto an obstacle square, **he/she can only leave it by going back in the direction he/she came from.**

Notes

- It is possible to exchange cubes on an obstacle square.
- The river produces 1 **Water** cube.
- **When contemplating, the mountain counts as a desert square:** the mountain can be contemplated too!



Daytime actions

In the complete version of the game, placing a cube can be done in 5 ways:

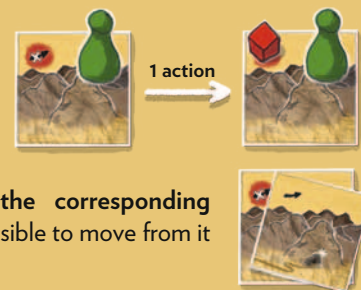
a | Taking care of a resource square

b | Building the *kellion*

c | Building a pathway

The player places a **Work** cube on the red logo of an obstacle square.

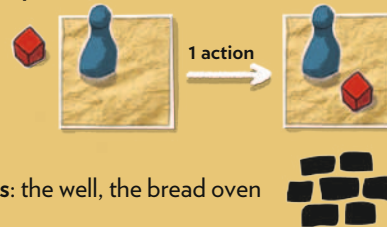
At the end of the day, that square will be **covered by the corresponding pathway**: it will then become possible to move from it like any other square.



d | Building on a desert square

The player places a **Work** cube on a desert square.

At the end of the day, that desert square will be replaced by a **building square chosen by the players**: the well, the bread oven or the basket workshop.



e | Bringing to life a desert square

The player places an **Attention** cube on a desert square.

At the end of the day, that desert square will be **replaced by one of the 3 remaining unused resources taken at random.**



Evening and night-time

At the end of each week, the *ammās* and the *abbās* meet in the church, to pray together, share a meal, and find out how the others are doing.

There are several changes in the evening steps.

1 | Go home

This depends on the calendar:

- On a normal day, everyone goes home to their *kellia*.
- If the calendar token indicates **Saturday** (evening) all the players move their tokens to the church square.

Note | This movement to the church can not be used to beg.



2 | Pray

3 | Eat and drink

On a **Saturday evening**, after prayer, the *abbas* and the *ammas* share a **common meal**. This means that they can freely give each other cubes before and after the meal.

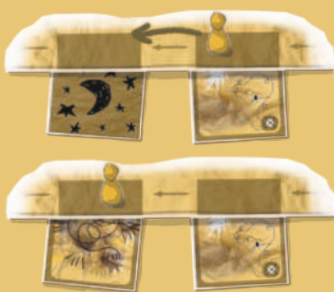
For example, if a player does not have a **Water** cube but another player has 2 of them, everything is fine. **Inner Life** cubes cannot be exchanged.

4 | Night-time incidents

First, move forward the token on the calendar.

Then, turn up the incident card of the corresponding new day and put it back in the same place, face up.

a | Famine and b | Drought



c | Sandstorm

In the full version, a sandstorm makes one square disappear.

- In the sector concerned, remove all the squares, all the cubes, all the improvements... everything has to be started all over again!
- The players chose together an empty square where they put a completely **new desert square (facing up)**.

- Shuffle the squares that have been removed, without looking at them, and put them back face down.

The one square which is left over is removed completely from the game without anyone looking at it.

Notes

- The *kellia* are not affected by sandstorms.
- To avoid having an obstacle right in front of a *kellion*, you can put the new desert square there.



d | Bandits

When the Bandits card is drawn, **each player must discard one cube** of their choice (it can be an **Inner life** cube).

e | Fasting

This card announces a day of fasting for all. The following evening, the *abbas* and *ammas* will not need to discard **Food** and **Water** cubes for the meal.

During the fast, it is not possible to beg at the church.

f | Akeia

The worst enemy of the *ammas* and the *abbas*: weariness as days pass, tiredness with all spiritual things, aridity in prayer.

When the *akedia* card is drawn, all the players immediately lose all their **Inner Life** cubes!

Note | The throw of the die has no effect for bandits, fasting and *akedia*.



5 | Squares and Cubes for the Morning

Before the cubes appear, the following changes are made:

- A desert square where a **Work** cube has been placed is replaced by a building of your choice (face up).
- A desert square where an **Attention** cube has been placed is replaced by a random resource (face up).
- A resource square where an **Attention** cube has been placed is covered by its improvement.
- An obstacle square where a **Work** cube has been placed is covered by its pathway.

These **Work** and **Attention** cubes are then removed.

Notes

- In an area affected by a sandstorm, the cubes placed have disappeared before step 5: there are therefore no improvements, pathways, or new squares.
- When there are no more resource or building squares left, the cube is removed, and the desert square is not replaced.

Once these steps are done, we start a new day. On **Sunday morning**, the players start from the church.

End of the game

The last round/day takes place when the token on the calendar arrives at the last place. This day is a **Saturday**: at the end of the last day, the players meet at the church, and can help each other to survive the last day.

The Taizé Community

Kellia was designed by brothers of the Taizé Community, which was founded in 1940 by Brother Roger and today is made up of nearly 100 brothers, from different Churches, from 25 nationalities. Committed to a simple lifestyle and to celibacy, they live by their own work. Every year, thousands of young people come to Taizé to pray, to seek a meaning for their lives, and to prepare to be creators of trust and reconciliation in the places where they live.

Who were the *abbas* and the *ammas* ?



An elder said to one of the brothers: Go and stay in your kellion and your kellion will teach you everything.

In around the fourth century, in Egypt, but also in Syria, Palestine and other areas of the Middle East and Asia Minor, a few men, and also some women, left their possessions, their families, and the everyday life of their time and went to live alone in the desert. They are known as the desert fathers and mothers.

There they lived an austere life. They made their homes in caves or in little *kellia* which they built themselves. They ate bread, herbs, and vegetables. They earned their living by simple manual work: weaving linen, making baskets or ropes.... And above all they prayed.

What was their motivation? Above all a deep thirst for communion with God. Their humble manual work, their life of poverty and asceticism, continual prayer, acceptance of oneself and of others, and the struggle with one's own darkness... the *amma* or *abba* undertook all these things in order to be available for God. The *kellion*, which was both their refuge and the place they chose to remain in, became the symbol of this personal struggle.

In the desert, each one confided to an elder his or her way of life, the thoughts that came to them, their habits... This was surely the most cooperative aspect of their lives.

Traces of these conversations have come down to us in the form of hundreds of brief stories, like the one quoted above, in which we find a mixture of wisdom, advice, anecdotes, imagination, and humour....

Though their life can seem heroic to us, it was above all very realistic. In the desert, there is almost nothing, and surviving meant looking after the few living things to be found there. That was true not only for food, for the earth, but also for the other people they occasionally met, and even, according to some legends, animals as well.

Respect for all that is alive, contemplation of the vast desert spaces, getting to grips with one's own limits... Could it not be said that the *abbas* and *ammas* practised, rather ahead of their time, a real ecology of the desert?