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Further Leaves from a White Monastery Codex
Containing Texts Attributed to Athanasius of Alexandria

(TAB. XXII-XXVII)

Alin Suciu

In a recent issue of the journal *orientalia*, Enzo Lucchesi commented upon a Sahidic parchment leaf kept in the Strasbourg University Library. The folio bears the inventory number “Copte 248” and it was formerly identified by Françoise Morard as part of the Coptic homily *De homicidis, In Michaelem*, attributed to Athanasius of Alexandria (CPG 2191; *clavis coptica* 0048). This sermon is readily available in the Italian translation made by Tito Orlandi after one of the Hamuli manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York (M 602, ff. 98r-110v). Besides, we have knowledge of several fragments that have survived from a White Monastery manuscript (codex MONB.FQ)4, to which the Strasbourg folio identified by Morard also belonged.

The “dioratic” gift of Pachomius is a theme which occurs already in his Greek *Vita Prima* and was developed later in Coptic literature. As the homily ascribed to Athanasius makes use of this motif and recounts, among other things, the way in which Pachomius tracked down a murderous monk through his visionary abilities, Louis Théophile Lefort included the episode in question in his edition of the Coptic *vita* of the founder of coenobitism5. It was precisely in this context that

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4 For the White Monastery codices, I employ the sigla system of the *Corpus dei manoscritti copti letterari* project (= CMCL, director: Tito Orlandi). According to CMCL’s classification, each White Monastery codex is designated by two letters of the Latin alphabet, which are preceded by MONB (= “Monastero Bianco”).
5 The “dioraticus charisma” was one of the charges against Pachomius at the Council of Latopolis (Esneh). Cf. Greek *Vita Prima* 112 (Greek text in F. Falkin, *Sancti Pachomii Vitae Graecae* [Subsidia hagiographica 19; Brussels 1932] 72-73); for the parallel in the Arabic *Life*, see E. Amelineau, *Monuments pour servir à l’histoire de l’Egypte chrétienne au IV* siècle. *Histoire de Saint Pâkhôme et de ses communautés* (Annales du Musée Guimet 17; Paris 1889) 591-595.
Lefort tried, for the first time, a tentative inventory of the White Monastery codex which contained the sermon *De homicidis*. The dossier was further enriched by Françoise Morard with two still unpublished leaves, Strasbourg Copte 248 and Paris BnF Copte 161⁴, f. 38. Finally, in his recent article, Lucchesi included in the same codex one more fragment, held in the Coptic Museum in Cairo (inv. no. 9286). This fragment was edited a long time ago without a proper identification by Henri Munier⁸.

I should like to remark in this brief note that at least three supplementary folios from the same manuscript are recoverable. Two of them are currently held in the National Library in Paris, while a third one is in the British Library in London. Given that the last fragment contains the explicit of *De homicidis* as well as the title of the following work, it is of central importance for the codicological reconstruction.

The two newly identified Paris fragments of the codex MONB.FQ are BnF Copte 131⁴, f. 28 and BnF Copte 131⁴, f. 32. The page numbers 7-8 and 9-10 are still visible on the parchment, showing that the fragments which are bound today in separate volumes were originally consecutive leaves. Although both of them were tentatively attributed by Ariel Shisha-Halevy to the Coptic author Shenoute of Atripe⁹, they parallel in fact ff. 101⁴, line 8-102⁴, line 6 in Pierpont Morgan M 602, the other copy of Ps.-Athenasius’ sermon *De homicidis*. Compared to the text of the Morgan codex, the White Monastery manuscript offers a shorter and slightly different recension, but over all there is no doubt that they represent two witnesses of the same text.

Until now, the last fragment of MONB.FQ was considered to be a leaf in the National Library in Paris identified by Morard (i.e. BnF Copte 161⁴, f. 38). The original pagination of this fragment is lost, but Enzo Lucchesi rightly pointed out that, if we compare the text to the version preserved in the Pierpont Morgan M 602, we must place it towards the end of Ps.-Athenasius’ sermon, as pages [41]-[42] of the codex¹¹. Now, I should like to remark that BnF Copte 161⁴, f. 38

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vies copistes de S. Pachôome et de ses premiers successeurs (Bibliothèque du Muséon 16; Louvain 1943) 382-385.

⁷ Lefort identified the remnants of three leaves, of which two are damaged but are recoverable from separate pieces: Paris BnF 129⁴, ff. 72 + 70, Paris BnF 129⁴, f. 71 + 133⁴, f. 57, and Naples I.B. 09, f. 25. All Paris fragments except BnF 113⁴, f. 57 were already published by E. Amélineau, *Monuments pour servir à l’histoire de l’Égypte chrétienne aux IVe et Vᵉ siècles* vol. 2 (MMAF 4/2; Paris 1895) 609-611. For the Naples fragment see G. Zoega, *Catalogus codicum Coptorum manu scriptorum qui in Museo Borgiano Velitris adservantur* (Rome 1810) 553 (= no. 229) and now P. Buze, *Catalogo dei manoscritti copti borgiani conservati presso la Biblioteca Nazionale “Vittorio Emanuele III”* di Napoli (Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche. Memorie, ser. 9, vol. 25/1; Rome 2009) 218.


⁹ A. Shisha-Halevy, *Coptic Grammatical Categories: Structural Studies in the Syntax of Shenoutean Sahidic* (Analecta Orientalia 53; Rome 1986) 219; S. Emmel is more cautious and counts them among the Shenoutean uncertain fragments, see his *Shenoute’s Literary Corpus* vol. 2 (CSCO 600, Subsidia 112; Louvain 2004) 904-905.


¹¹ Lucchesi, *Or* 78, 95.
was actually followed, at a distance of only one folio, by a previously unnoticed fragment in the British Library. This is BL Or. 6807, f. 6 and, although the parchment is a bit damaged, the pagination 4[5]-[4]6 still can be recovered on it.

The new London folio is of special interest because it carries some important codicological details. Thus, the recto contains the concluding lines of the pseudo-Athanasian homily De homicidio and a subscription of the copyist, who signed himself as “Aurelius Flavius Philotheus”\(^1\). The verso of the fragment contains the title of the following work, which reads: ΟΥΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ ΝΤΕΣΑΠΑ ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΟΣ ΠΑΡΧΙΕΩΠΟΣ ΝΤΡΑΚΟΤΕ ΕΑΤΗΝΟΝΥΟΥΣ ΦΛΑΠΑ ΖΩΡΦΙΟΝΙΟΥΣ [Μ]ΗΑΠΑ ΘΕΟΔΌΡΟΣ ΝΤΕΡΕΓΧΩΤΩΝ ΧΕ Α[Α]ΓΥΑ ΠΑΖΩΜΟΝ. ΠΩΣΤ [Ν]ΤΕΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ ΝΤΟΝ ΜΜΟΥ. ΝΟΥΕΙΡΗΜΝ ΝΤΕΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΖΑΜΝ (“A letter of Apa Athanasios the archbishop of Alexandria, which he sent to Apa Horsiesius and Apa Theodorus when he heard that Apa Pachomius, the father of the Koinonia, had died. In the peace of God, Amen”). It has not been established yet whether this letter, which claims to belong to Athanasius, is genuine or not\(^2\).

Be that as it may, it becomes apparent that De homicidio was followed in codex MONB.FQ by the epistle of (pseudo-)Athanasius to Horsiesius and Theodorus concerning the death of Pachomius (CPG 2190; clavis coptica 0453).

It is interesting to note that, although Lefort was aware of the London fragment and published the surviving portion of Athanasius’ letter immediately before the fragments of De homicidio, he recorded it as belonging to a separate codex and even dated the handwriting one century earlier\(^3\). This shows once more how relative is the attempt to date the Coptic manuscripts on purely formal grounds.

Adding the three fragments identified here, we may now attempt the codicological reconstruction of the manuscript:

Ps.-Athanasius of Alexandria, De homicidio, In Michaelum (CPG 2191; clavis coptica 0048)

3 leaves missing
pages 7-8 = Paris 131, f. 28
pages 9-10 = Paris 131', f. 32
1 leaf missing
pages 13-14 = Paris 129, ff. 72 + 70
pages 15-16 = Paris 129, f. 71 + 133, f. 57
5 leaves missing

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\(^{13}\) A. van Lantschoot, Recueil des colonophes des manuscrits chrétiens d’Égypte, vol. 1: Les colonophes copies des manuscrits sahidiques (Bibliothèque du Muséon 1; Louvain 1929) no. Lxc.

\(^{14}\) Cf. Lefort, Les vies coptes, p. Ixxxiv. A letter from Athanasius to Horsiesius concerning the death of Theodorus appears in Pachomius’ Vita Prima 150 (Greek text in Halkin, Sancti Pachomii vita, 95-96); but also in Sahidic and Bohairic; for the Sahidic text, see Lefort, S. Pachomii vitae Sahidice scriptae, 1: 301-303; for Bohairic, idem, S. Pachomii vitae Bohairice scripta (CSCO 89, Scriptores coptici 7; Louvain 1953) 214-215. Translation of both Coptic versions in idem, Les vies coptes 233-234 (French translation from Bohairic), 347-348 (French translation from Sahidic).

\(^{15}\) Edited by Lefort, S. Pachomii vitae Sahidice scriptae, 1, 346 (= no. 18; S\(^9\)); translated in idem, Les vies coptes 380. In S. Pachomii vitae Sahidice scriptae, 1, p. x, Lefort described the fragments as coming from separate manuscripts, S\(^5\) and S\(^6\), and dated the first of them in the 10th century and the second in the 11th, without realizing that he ascribed the same hand to different centuries.
Athanasius of Alexandria, *Letter to Horsiesius and Theodorus* (CPG 2190; *clavis coptica* 0453)

As a final remark, it should be stated that the internal coherence of the codex is established not only by the putative Athanasian authorship of the two works, but also by their common reference to Pachomius.

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Paris, BnF Copte 131*, f. 28 r.
Paris, BnF Copte 131', f. 32 r.
A. Suciu, Further Leaves from a White Monastery Codex

Tab. XXV

Paris, BnF Copte 1317, f. 32 v.