

Adamantius

**Rivista del Gruppo Italiano di Ricerca su
“Origene e la tradizione alessandrina”**

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**Journal of the Italian Research Group on
“Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition”**

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**Revisiting the Literary Dossier of Stephen of Thebes:
With Preliminary Editions of the Greek Redactions
of the Ascetic Commandments**

di
Alin Suciu

1. Introduction

We do not possess any firm historical evidence concerning Stephen of Thebes, the putative author of several texts of ascetic content. The only detail more or less certain about him is that he may have been a native of Thebes, as his name seems to indicate. However, Thebes designated in antiquity a vast geographical area, from Hermopolis Magna (El-Ashmunein), situated at the border between Middle and Upper Egypt, to Syene, the southernmost point of the Roman Empire.

There have already been some attempts to reconstruct the literary corpus of Stephen of Thebes. Jean Darrouzès remarked that three writings have survived under his name in Greek, a *Sermo asceticus* (CPG 8240), a short set of ascetic *Commandments* ('Εντολαι) and a monastic *Diataxis* (Διάταξις)¹. In his encyclopedic survey of the Christian-Arabic literature, Georg Graf ascribed to the same author a sermon on penitence which is attested only in Arabic². More recently, William Veder has discovered that a writing entitled *On the All-Night Vigils* is attributed to Stephen of Thebes in Slavonic³. To these, one may add a brief text preserved in Arabic and گە'ئز, which I conventionally call *Gnomai*⁴.

Because the *Commandments* and the *Diataxis* are sometimes attributed in some late Greek manuscripts to Stephen the Sabaite († 796), Constantin Diobouniotis wrongly asserted that their real author is the Palestinian monk⁵. However, Darrouzès pointed out that, while it is true that Θηβαῖτης can theoretically be seen as a corruption of Σαβαῖτης, it is difficult to imagine a similar transformation in the case of Θηβαῖος, which appears in most of the manuscripts⁶. For his part, Jean-Marie Sauget highlighted that *Vaticanus arabicus* 71, which is the oldest Arabic exemplar of the *Sermo asceticus*, was inscribed in the year 885 in the Mar Sabas Monastery, and it would therefore be complicated to theorize that the name of the text's real author fell into oblivion in the very place where Stephen the Sabaite lived as a monk for fifty years⁷. A Sahidic Coptic manuscript that I will describe later in this article lends further weight to the argument against Diobouniotis' theory. The manuscript in question, or rather its remains because only a few folios and several meager fragments have survived from it, can paleographically be dated around the year 600, which antedates with more than a century the birth of Stephen the Sabaite, traditionally placed in 725. In conclusion, all these details militate against identifying Stephen of Thebes with his namesake from the Mar Sabas Monastery.

Jon F. Dechow and Enzo Lucchesi have speculated that Stephen of Thebes could be the one cursorily mentioned in the *Historia Lausiaca* (CPG 6036; BHG 1435-1438v), when Palladius says that Melania

¹ J. DARROUZES, *Étienne le Thébain*, in DSp 4, Paris 1961, 1525-1526.

² G. GRAF, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur* 1 (StT 118), Vatican 1944, 413 and 2 (StT 133), Vatican 1947, 498.

³ First in an article published in Bulgarian, W. VEDER, *Заповедите на Стефан Тибейски*, Preslavska knižovna škola 12 (2012) 165-209, and then in English in *The Works of Stephen of Thebes in Slavonic Translation*, forthcoming in Polata knigopisnaja 39 (2012). I wish to thank Prof. Veder for sharing with me the latter paper before its publication.

⁴ See section 2.5 *infra*.

⁵ C. DIOBOUNIOTIS, *Στέφανος ὁ Σαβαῖτης*, Ιερὸς Σύνδεσμος 193 (May 15, 1913) 9-12, at 10-11; continuation in Ιερὸς Σύνδεσμος 194 (June 1, 1913) 10-13.

⁶ DARROUZES, *Étienne le Thébain*, cit. (n. 1), 1525. However, to the best of my knowledge, Θηβαῖτης is attested only in the manuscript Jerusalem, Holy Sepulcher no. 170, which is dated 1781.

⁷ J.-M. SAUGET, *Une version arabe du 'Sermon ascétique' d'Étienne le Thébain*, Muséon 77 (1964) 367-406, at 372-373.

became versed in the writings of Origen, Gregory, Stephen, Pierius, and Basil⁸. In another context, Palladius mentions that Ammonius read six million lines from Origen, Didymus the Blind, Pierius and Stephen⁹. Although these references are oblique, it is nevertheless noteworthy that a certain Stephen appears twice in lists of authors akin to the 'Origenist' party. At the first glance, this information seems to apply well to Stephen of Thebes' *Sermo asceticus*, which contains apodictic *sententiae* of ascetic character and allegorical interpretations of the scriptures, being in this regard similar to the works of Evagrius and the *Logoi* of Isaiah of Scetis (CPG 5555), two important authors of 'Origenist' extraction. However, the list of authors read by Ammonius mentions Origen and two of his closest emulators, Didymus the Blind and Pierius of Alexandria, and there is nothing in the writings of Stephen of Thebes that would recommend him as a significant Origenist theologian.

It more likely that he is the one called «Apa Stephen the Anchorite» (ἀπα στεφανος παναχωρ(ιτης)) in the list of the books that belonged to the Coptic Monastery of Apa Elias of the Rock¹⁰. This hypothesis is palatable given that the text of the *Commandments* is likewise ascribed to «Abba Stephen the Anchorite» (ἀββᾶ Στεφάνου τοῦ ἀναχωρητοῦ) in *Parisinus Graecus* 1598. The information is probably further supported by the fact that the Coptic calendar provided by Abū 'l-Barakāt ibn Kabar in his *Lamp of Darkness* mentions on Pashons 17 (= May 7) a certain Stephen the Anchorite¹¹. However, these details can at best demonstrate that Stephen of Thebes was known in Coptic Egypt, but do not help us to reconstruct the chronology of his life.

While it is true that we do not possess any clear historical source concerning Stephen of Thebes, we may draw from his writings some tentative conclusions about the milieu in which he lived. Stephen was, before anything else, a devout ascetic but, at the same time, he was also an author who wrote following certain literary trends and patterns that were common in his epoch. Thus, although Dom Michel van Parys doubted that Stephen of Thebes could belong to the monastic settlements of Scetis, Nitria and Kellia¹², I believe that the ascetic spirituality of Lower Egypt is actually transparent throughout his writings. For example, in the *Sermo asceticus*, Stephen insists on the symbiosis between the monk and the cell, a literary *topos* proper to the authors that belonged to the semi-anchoritic communities from Nitria and Kellia¹³. From the same text we can infer that the monks visited each other on Sundays (cf. § 47 of the Greek text). This habit was usual in the isolated monastic centers of Lower Egypt, where the monks lived alone or in small groups and met on Saturdays and Sundays to celebrate the Eucharist and share a meal together¹⁴. The practice of sitting in the cell while performing

⁸ J.F. DECHOW, *Dogma and Mysticism in Early Christianity. Epiphanius of Cyprus and the Legacy of Origen* (North American Patristic Society. Patristic Monograph Series 13), Macon, GA 1988, 167; E. LUCCHESI, *Vers l'identification d'Étienne de Thèbes*, *AnBoll* 116 (1998) 106. Lucchesi revisited his hypothesis later in *Retractatio à propos de l'identification d'Étienne le Thébain*, *AnBoll* 125 (2007) 15-16. See *H. Laus.* 55.3, ed. C. BUTLER, *The Lausiac History of Paladius* 2 (TaS 6), Cambridge 1904, 149: Αὕτη λογιωτάτη γενομένη ἡ καὶ φιλήσασα τὸν λόγον τὰς νύκτας εἰς ἡμέρας μετέβαλε πάν σύγγραμμα τῶν ἀρχαίων ὑπομνηματιστῶν διελθοῦσα. ἐν οἷς Ωριγένους μυριάδας τριακοσίας, Γρηγορίου καὶ Στεφάνου καὶ Περίου καὶ Βασιλείου καὶ ἑτέρων τινῶν σπουδαιοτάτων μυριάδας εἰκοσιπέντε.

⁹ *H. Laus.* 11.4, ed. C. BUTLER (cit. n. 8), 34 (text).

¹⁰ This list is preserved on an ostraca which is kept in the French Institute of Oriental Archaeology (IFAO) in Cairo. The text is available in several editions, the best one being that of R.-G. COQUIN, *Le catalogue de la bibliothèque du couvent de Saint-Élie 'du rocher'* (ostraca IFAO 13375), BIFAO 75 (1975) 207-239, at 211. The identification of Stephen of Thebes with Stephen the Anchorite was timidly suggested by Coquin in his article and firmly by E. LUCCHESI, *Retractatio*, cit. (n. 8), 15.

¹¹ E. TISSERANT, *Martyrologes et ménologes orientaux. Le calendrier d'Abou 'l-Barakāt* (PO 10.3), Paris 1913, 27.

¹² *Enseignements des Pères du désert. Hyperéchios, Étienne de Thèbes, Zosime*, ed. by L. REGNAULT et al. (Spiritualité orientale 51), Béziers-en-Mauges 1991, 60.

¹³ This was convincingly demonstrated in A. GUILLAUMONT, *Un philosophe au désert: Evagre le Pontique* (Textes et traditions), Paris 2004, 197-200. See also F. DODEL, *Sitzen der Wüstenväter: eine Untersuchung anhand der Apophthegmata Patrum* (Paradosis: Beiträge zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur und Theologie 42), Freiburg 1997.

¹⁴ C. DONAHUE, *The Agape of the Hermits of Scetis*, *StMon* 1 (1959) 97-114.

manual labor and meditation – the most common daily activity of the monks at Nitria and Kellia¹⁵ – is also mentioned in the *Sermo asceticus*, «if you sit for the work of your hands (ἐργοχειρώ σου), do not let your thought to wander outside» (§ 36)¹⁶.

What is more, the *Sermo asceticus* and the *Commandments*, which are probably the only authentic writings of Stephen of Thebes, are akin to other literary productions of the Lower Egyptian monastic movement, particularly to the works of Evagrius, the *Apophthegmata Patrum* (CPG 5558) and the *Asceticon* of Abba Isaiah of Scetis. The austere asceticism and the literary *topoi* of Lower Egypt permeate deeply Stephen's writings, suggesting that he belonged to the same milieu. Accepting that Stephen of Thebes remains an enigma, I would dare to propose that he lived, at least for a certain period in his life, in the semi-anchoritic settlements of Lower Egypt and that we would probably not be too far wrong to place his *floruit* not later than the late fourth or early fifth centuries. I will further develop this hypothesis in the present article by showing some parallels that connect the writings of Stephen of Thebes with the monastic literature of Lower Egypt.

Until now, the literary corpus of Stephen of Thebes has largely been neglected. As a consequence, none of the three Greek texts that survive under his name has properly been edited. This article furnishes an edition and English translation of the Greek text of the *Commandments*. The present paper also aims to fill a bibliographical lacuna because, with the exception of the *Sermo asceticus*, the literary works ascribed to Stephen of Thebes are not mentioned in the *claves*. As for the two brief dictionary articles dedicated to him, they are already outdated¹⁷. Therefore, my edition is preceded by a survey all the literary works that have been attributed to Stephen of Thebes in ancient manuscripts and modern research.

In his aforementioned article, Darrouzès already took a first step towards an inventory of the Greek manuscripts containing the works of Stephen of Thebes. As the documentation of his writings offered a good opportunity to locate supplementary manuscripts, a full account of the results in this direction will be provided below. Unfortunately, the research is hampered by various constraints, not least because many repositories and collections are difficult to access. Moreover, the published catalogues often give lapidary descriptions and omit to furnish the *incipit* of the works, which further jeopardizes a detailed account of the manuscripts that preserve texts attributed to Stephen of Thebes. Consequently, when the reference to folios or page numbers will not be properly pointed out in the following pages, it means that the manuscript in question has been available to me only through the intermediary of descriptive catalogues or other reference works.

2. Stephen of Thebes' Literary Corpus

Although the figure of Stephen of Thebes remains shrouded in mystery, a series of texts circulated under his name, some of which had enjoyed a wide diffusion. Here is the list of the writings that have tentatively been attributed to him until now.

2.1. *Sermo asceticus*

Incipit, Πρῶτον μέν, τέκνον, ἀποτάσσου τῷ κόσμῳ, ἀποτάσσου τῇ γῇ σου, τοῖς συγγενεῖσιν σου.

Greek	Coptic (Sahidic)	Arabic
1. Paris, BnF Grec 1066, ff. 86r-94r	1. White Monastery, Codex MONB.ON: Paris, BnF Copte 132 ¹ , f. 87 + BnF Copte 133 ² , f. 42;	1. Vatican, Arabicus 71, 226v-234r
2. Athos, Lavra Γ8, ff. 29v-34v	Venice, Marciana 192, ff. 99-100;	1.* Vatican, Arabicus 695 (modern copy of no. 1)
3. Athos, Panteleimon 114, ff. 22r-29r	Naples, National Library IB.9, ff.	2. Sinai, Arabic 236, ff. 208r-215v
4. Athos, Lavra Α181, pp. 67-75		3. Sinai, Arabic 571, ff. 216r-222v

¹⁵ H.G. EVELYN WHITE, *The Monasteries of the Wâdi 'N Natrûn 2: The History of the Monasteries of Nitria and of Scetis* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition), New York 1932, 198-200; L. REGNAULT, *La vie quotidienne des Pères du désert en Égypte au IV^e siècle*, Paris 1990, 109-116.

¹⁶ However, the work of the hands is mentioned only in one of the Greek manuscripts, Athos, Lavra Γ8.

¹⁷ J. DARROUZES, *Étienne le Thébain*, cit. (n. 1); S.K. SAMIR, *Stephen the Theban*, in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* 7, ed. by A.S. ATIYA, New York 1991, 2154b-2155b.

52-56; Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Copt. f. 157[P]	4. Paris, BnF Arabe 253, ff. 246r- 250v
2. MS Qasr el-Wizz, 65-10-61, frags. II-III	Epitome (probably by al-Šafi ibn al-‘Assâl): 1. Vatican, Arabicus 398, ff. 102r- 104r 2. Paris, BnF Syriaque 239, ff. 137v- 139v (Garšūni)
Ethiopic (Ge'ez)	Georgian
1. EMML 4493, ff. 103r-105r	1. Sinai, Georgian 35, ff. 90r-94r

The *Sermo asceticus* stands out as the longest and, at the same time, the most significant writing of Stephen of Thebes. The text contains a series of ascetic precepts for the use of the solitary monks. How to avoid the evil thoughts and other snares of the demons while sitting in the cell and attain the virtues of the ascetic life are the main themes of the *Sermo asceticus*.

The text is written in a mold similar to that of the commandments of Abba Isaiah, being comparable to the monastic rules that feature prominently in the *Asceticon* (notably in *Logoi* V, VIII, X-XIII, XV, XXIII, XXV according to the Syriac order)¹⁸. However, this does not necessarily imply that Isaiah influenced Stephen. Our author addresses the monks who live a solitary life in isolated cells. The advices are often introduced by the specific formula καθεζόμενος ἐν τῷ κελλίῳ σου, or by other expressions derived from it, ἐὰν καθέζῃ εἰς τὸ κελλίον σου, καθεζόμενος, καθεζομένου σοῦ etc. No less than sixteen occurrences of some such expressions can be found in the Greek text of the *Sermo* (§§ 36, 37, 38, 39, 43 [twice], 44, 45 [twice], 46, 47, 49, 52, 66, 71, 104), while three others feature only in the Coptic version. These expressions are reverberations of the cell-centered literature that flourished in semi-anchoritic communities of Lower Egypt¹⁹. There are many similar examples in the related literature. One may remember, for example, the answer given by Abba Moses to a young monk in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, «Go, sit in your cell and your cell will teach you everything»²⁰, or the well-known passage from Evagrius' *Rerum monachalium rationes* (CPG 2441), which penetrated also into the corpus of apophthegms, «Seated in your cell, gather together your mind, give heed to the day of your death, and then look at the dying of your body» (Καθεζόμενος ἐν τῷ κελλίῳ σου συνάγαγέ σου τὸν νοῦν, μνήσθητι ἡμέρας θανάτου, ἵδε τότε τοῦ σώματος τὴν νέκρωσιν)²¹.

The sources connected to Scetis, Nitria and Kellia transformed this expression from a daily routine of the monks into a literary *topos*²². One may argue that Isaiah of Scetis, Stephen of Thebes and the other authors that belonged to the semi-anchoritic communities of Lower Egypt developed a phenomenology of the cell, by offering a thorough account of the experience of the self in solitude.

¹⁸ I generally follow the numbering of the Syriac *Logoi* according to Isaiah of Scetis, *Asceticon*, ed. R. DRAGUET, *Les cinq recensions de l'Ascéticon syriaque d'Abba Isaïe* (CSCO.S 120-123), Louvain 1968, because it is the only version properly edited. Although the edition of the Greek original still remains a desideratum, I will sometimes quote in this article from the only extensive publication of the Greek text of the *Asceticon*, ed. A. IORDANITES, *Toῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν ἀββᾶ Ἡσαΐου λόγοι κθ'*, Jerusalem 1911.

¹⁹ On this type of literature, see D.L. BROOKS HEDSTROM, *The Geography of the Monastic Cell in Early Egyptian Monastic Literature*, ChH 78 (2009) 756-791; F. DODEL, *Sitzen der Wüstenwäter*, cit. (n. 13).

²⁰ AP/Alph Moses 6; AP/Syst II.19. Greek text of the alphabetic collection in PG 65, coll. 71-440; for the systematic collection, see J.-C. GUY, *Les apophthegmes des Pères. Collection systématique*, 3 vols. (SC 387, 474, 498), Paris 1993-2005.

²¹ AP/Syst III.5. Translation by R.E. SINKEWICZ, *Evagrius of Pontus. The Greek Ascetic Corpus* (OEC), Oxford 2003, 9; Greek text in PG 40, col. 1261A.

²² See the following occurrences of the expression in the Syriac text of Abba Isaiah's *Asceticon* edited by Draguet, *Logoi* V.20; VIII.4; X.10.14; XI.26a.28.40.72; XII.39; XXV.27.29.

Arabic

The Arabic version of the *Sermo asceticus* emerged first. In 1964, Jean-Marie Sauget published the Arabic text, which has survived in four manuscripts²³. Among these, *Vaticanus arabicus* 71, 226v-234r, a parchment codex copied in 885 at the Great Lavra of Saint Sabas in Palestine, is remarkable because of its age²⁴. For this reason, Sauget chose it as base text, against which he collated the other exemplars. Sauget also remarked that an unpublished Arabic epitome of the *Sermo asceticus* is extant in two manuscripts, *Vaticanus arabicus* 398, ff. 102r-104r and *Parisinus syriacus* 239, ff. 137v-139v (Garšūnī)²⁵. The author of the epitome was probably the Coptic scholar al-Şafi ibn al-‘Assāl²⁶.

§§ 78-85 of the Arabic version of the *Sermo asceticus* represent an interpolation that does not appear in the Greek original. George Farag has pointed out that this long passage corresponds to a letter that is ascribed to Anthony the Great in the Arabic tradition (Letter 9), and to Ammonas in Greek and Syriac (Letter 2; cf. CPG 2380)²⁷. Moreover, the beginning of the same letter circulated independently as an apophthegm attributed to Anthony in Coptic Bohairic and to Poemen in Ethiopic²⁸. As we will see a little bit further, the Gə‘əz version of the *Sermo asceticus* incorporates only that part of the letter which parallels the Anthony/Poemen apophthegm.

Greek

Five years after Sauget's publication of the Arabic text, the Greek original of the *Sermo asceticus* was edited and translated into French by Édouard des Places²⁹. The edition of the Greek text is based on only one manuscript, Paris, BnF Grec 1066, ff. 86r-94r (eleventh-twelfth centuries). Another Greek codex containing the *Sermo asceticus*, Athos, Lavra Γ8, ff. 29v-34v, was already identified by Darrouzès in his 1961 article, but remained inaccessible to des Places³⁰.

²³ J.-M. SAUGET, *Étienne le Thébain*, cit. (n. 7), 369-370. Sauget mentioned six manuscripts but his no. 2 (Vat. arab. 695) is just an eighteenth-century copy of Vat. arab. 71, produced in the Vatican library. Similarly, no. 6 (Sinai, Arabic 235) does not feature the *Sermo asceticus* but rather the *Gnomai*. Description of Vat. arab. 695 in A. MAI, *Scriptorum veterum nova collectio* 4, Rome 1831, 599.

²⁴ J.-M. SAUGET, *Étienne le Thébain*, cit. (n. 7), 373. The most detailed description of this manuscript is still that of A. MAI, *Scriptorum veterum* 4, cit. (n. 23), 143-145, although the year of the completion of the manuscript is misprinted there as 788 CE (see *ibid.*, 599 for the real date). Cf. also J.-M. SAUGET, *Les fragments de l'Asceticon de l'abbé Isaïe de Scété du Vatican arabe* 71, OrChr 48 (1964) 235-259, at 235.

²⁵ The call number of the Paris codex is wrongly indicated in J.-M. SAUGET, *Étienne le Thébain*, cit. (n. 7), 371 as «293» instead of «239.» Description of the manuscript in H. ZOTENBERG, *Manuscrits orientaux. Catalogues des manuscrits syriaques et sabéens (mandaiites) de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris 1874, 192-197.

²⁶ J.-M. SAUGET, *Étienne le Thébain*, cit. (n. 7), 371-372, remarked on the basis of a *subscriptio* in the Vatican manuscript that the epitome might belong to one of the members of the ibn al-‘Assāl family. S.K. SAMIR, *Stephen the Theban*, cit. (n. 17), 2155b, maintained that the one who reworked the text was al-Şafi ibn al-‘Assāl.

²⁷ See G. FARAG, *Les Lettres attribuées à Antoine dans la deuxième collection arabe (Lettres 8 à 20). Sont-elles d'Antoine ou d'Ammonas? Étude comparée des différentes versions et interprétation théologique* (Ph.D. diss., Université de Strasbourg, 2012) 85-86, 217-233; Syriac text and Latin translation of the letter in M. KMOSKO, *Ammonii Eremitae Epistolae* (PO 10.6), Paris 1914, 18 [570]-20 [572]; Greek text and French translation in F. NAU, *Ammonas, successeur de Saint Antoine* (PO 11.4), Paris 1914, 133 [435]-135 [437].

²⁸ For the Coptic version, see É. AMÉLINEAU, *Histoire des monastères de la Basse-Égypte* (Annales du Musée Guimet 25), Paris 1894, 25; Ethiopic text edited by V. ARRAS, *Collectio monastica* (CSCO.Ae 45-46), Louvain 1963, 85-86 (text), 63-64 (translation). Cf. J.-M. SAUGET, *Étienne le Thébain*, cit. (n. 7), 392, n. 2; IDEM, *Une nouvelle collection éthiopienne d'Apophthegmata Patrum*, OrChrP 31 (1965) 177-182, at 182; *Lettres des Pères du désert. Ammonas, Macaire, Arsène, Sérapion de Thmuis* ed. B. OUTTIER et al. (Spiritualité orientale 42), Béziers-en-Mauges 1985, 19, n. 2.

²⁹ É. DES PLACES, *Le 'Discours ascétique' d'Étienne de Thèbes. Texte grec inédit et traduction*, Muséon 82 (1969) 35-59. Some modern translations based on the Greek text published by des Places are extant: French in *Enseignements des Pères du désert*, cit. (n. 12), 57-91 (translated by Dom M. van Parys); Italian in L. CREMASCHI, *Parole dal Deserto. Detti inediti di Iperechio, Stefano di Tebe e Zosima* (Padri orientali), Comunità di Bose, Magnano 1992, 51-88; English in T. VIVIAN, *The Ascetic Teaching of Stephen of Thebes*, Cistercian Studies Quarterly 34 (1999) 425-454, repr. in IDEM, *Words to Live By: Journeys in Ancient and Modern Egyptian Monasticism*, Kalamazoo, MI 2005, 283-321.

³⁰ J. DARROUZES, *Étienne le Thébain*, cit. (n. 1), 1525.

Recently, Fr. Filotheus Bălan of Petru Vodă Monastery, Romania, collated the Athonite manuscript for a Romanian edition of the *Sermo asceticus*³¹. What is more, Fr. Filotheus has identified two previously unknown Greek manuscripts of the *Sermo*, both of them kept in Athos monasteries, Panteleimon 114, ff. 22r-29r (fifteenth century) and Lavra Λ181, pp. 67-75 (eighteenth century). In both codices, the author is wrongly identified as Stephen the Younger, the eight-century martyr for the anti-iconoclast cause:

Panteleimon 114, f. 22r, Τοῦ ἀγίου Στεφάνου τοῦ νέου, Ἐπιστολὴ πρὸς τοὺς αὐτοῦ μαθητάς
Lavra Λ181, p. 67, Τοῦ ἀγίου Στεφάνου τοῦ νέου, Πρὸς τὸν αὐτοῦ μαθητὴν

The Lavra Γ8 manuscript contains only §§ 1-53 of des Places' edition. Another remarkable feature of this copy is that it lacks, among other passages, §§ 49-51 of the text. It is precisely this missing portion that can be found in the systematic collection of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* as two anonymous sayings³²:

Stephen of Thebes³³

Καθεζόμενος οὖν, ἔχε τὴν μνήμην τοῦ θεοῦ πᾶσαν ὥραν, καὶ κυκλώσει σε ὁ φόβος αὐτοῦ πάντοτε. ὅτι ὁ φόβος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκβάλλει ἀπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς πᾶν ἀμάρτημα καὶ πᾶν κακὸν καὶ πᾶσαν ἀνομίαν,

ὅ κτησάμενος ἔαντῷ τὸν φόβον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκτήσατο πάντα τὰ χαρίσματα, ὁ ἔχων τὸν φόβον τοῦ θεοῦ ἔχει θησαυρὸν μεστὸν ἀγαθῶν, καὶ διὰ τὸν φόβον τοῦ θεοῦ πάντες ἐκκλίνουσιν ἀπὸ κακοῦ.

Apophthegmata Patrum³⁴

Εἶπε γέρων. Καθημένου σοῦ ἐν τῷ κελλἴῳ σου ἔχε τὴν μνήμην τοῦ θεοῦ πᾶσαν ὥραν καὶ κυκλώσει σε ὁ φόβος τοῦ θεοῦ. ἐκλαβε οὖν ἀπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς σου πᾶν ἀμάρτημα καὶ πᾶν κακὸν ἵνα εὑρηται ἀνάπαυσιν.

Εἶπε πάλιν. Ὁ κτησάμενος τὸν φόβον τοῦ θεοῦ ἔχει θησαυρὸν μεστὸν ἀγαθῶν ὅτι ὁ φόβος τοῦ θεοῦ σώζει τὸν ἀνθρωπὸν ἀπὸ ἀμάρτιας.

Does the fact that the Lavra Γ8 codex omits the passages attested in the *Apophthegmata* collection imply that the section in question did not belong to the original recension of the *Sermo asceticus*, being rather interpolated? Some such hypothesis spurs us to further explore in the future whether this manuscript contains a more pristine recension of the text. However, the fact that the fragment employs the expression Καθημένου σοῦ ἐν τῷ κελλἴῳ σου, which has numerous occurrences in the *Sermo asceticus*, rather suggests that it must be treated as genuine.

The other two manuscripts recently identified have the same redaction as the Paris codex published by des Places, although both feature numerous different readings³⁵. In light of these new discoveries, the Greek text obviously needs to be reedited.

Georgian

In 1970, Gérard Garitte edited the Georgian version of the *Sermo asceticus* and translated it into Latin³⁶. The text is preserved in a single parchment codex from St. Catherine Monastery at Sinai (Georgian 35, ff. 90r-94r, tenth century)³⁷. The Georgian translation is much shorter compared to the other versions, omitting more than half of the Greek original, namely §§ 11-49, and 67c-83. The text is attributed in Georgian to Stephen the Monk. According to Garitte, the translation was made directly from Greek³⁸.

³¹ F. BĂLAN, *Ascheticon* (forthcoming). I am particularly indebted to Fr. Bălan for the numerous fruitful discussions about Stephen of Thebes.

³² AP/Syst III.46-47. Cf. L. REGNAULT, *Les sentences des Pères du désert 3: Troisième recueil*, Sablé-sur-Sarthe 1976, 71; J.-C. GUY, *Les apophthegmes des Pères. I-IX*, cit. (n. 20), 177 n. 1. The two apophthegms are preserved also in Armenian, see L. REGNAULT, *Les sentences des Pères du desert 2: Nouveau recueil*, Sablé-sur-Sarthe 1977², 255.

³³ É. DES PLACES, *Étienne de Thèbes*, cit. (n. 29), 43.

³⁴ J.-C. GUY, *Les apophthegmes des Pères. I-IX*, cit. (n. 20), 176.

³⁵ F. BĂLAN, *Ascheticon*, cit. (n. 31).

³⁶ G. GARITTE, *Le 'Discours ascétique' d'Étienne le Thébain en géorgien*, Muséon 83 (1970) 73-93.

³⁷ G. GARITTE, *Catalogue des manuscrits géorgiens littéraires du Mont Sinaï* (CSCO.Sub 9), Louvain 1956, 111.

³⁸ G. GARITTE, *Le 'Discours ascétique'*, cit. (n. 36), 76-77.

Coptic (Sahidic)

In his edition of the works of Paul of Tamma, another Egyptian ascetic author, Tito Orlando published under Paul's name two leaves written in Sahidic (Venice, Marciana 192, ff. 99-100), containing parts of Stephen of Thebes' *Sermo asceticus*³⁹. The confusion occurred, on the one hand, because of a certain paleographical similarity between the fragments of the codex containing the writings of Paul of Tamma (MONB.GU) and those of the *Sermo asceticus*, and, on the other, because of the stylistic features shared by the two authors⁴⁰. It was only some years later that Enzo Lucchesi disentangled the fragments in question from the writings of Paul of Tamma⁴¹. Moreover, Lucchesi added to the same dismembered codex of the *Sermo asceticus* five other folios that are in the National Library in Naples (National Library IB.9, ff. 52-56) and a small Parisian fragment (BnF Copte 132¹, f. 87)⁴². The codex belonged to the Monastery of Apa Shenoute, more widely known as the White Monastery, situated in Upper Egypt near Sohag. The manuscripts of this monastery have survived as *membra disiecta* scattered piecemeal across the world⁴³. We can now add to the same codex, currently inventoried in the *Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari* (= CMCL) database as MONB.ON⁴⁴, the following two supplementary fragments of the *Sermo asceticus*:

Paris, BnF Copte 133², f. 42
 Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Copt. f. 157(P)

The first of them attaches to the *Parisinus* identified by Lucchesi, both belonging to the same leaf. The two Paris fragments contain portions of §§ 20-32 of the *Sermo asceticus*. The recto of the Oxford fragment corresponds to the last but one paragraph of the Greek text (§ 107), while on its recto are still visible vestiges of the codex's colophon. This fragment prompts a few remarks. Firstly, it provides evidence that the Sahidic translation of the *Sermo asceticus* was not partial, but complete. Secondly, the little text surviving from the colophon mentions that the copyist's name was Matthew of Touton. Given that the same scribe copied for the Monastery of Apa Shenoute other codices, including two which were produced in the year 656 Era of the Martyrs (= 939-940 CE), we can date codex MONB.ON around the mid tenth century⁴⁵.

³⁹ T. ORLANDI, *Paolo di Tamma: Opere*, Rome 1988, 65-68 (semi-diplomatic edition of the Sahidic text), 116-121 (continuous Sahidic text and Italian translation). The *editio princeps* of these two folios was prepared by G. MINGARELLI, *Ægyptiorum codicum reliquiae Venetiis in Bibliotheca Naniiana asservatae*, Bologna 1785, 328-337 (= no. 15).

⁴⁰ On the literary connection between Stephen of Thebes and Paul of Tamma see P. LUISIER, *Paul de Tamma*, Lettre sur la cellule. *Une traduction française*, in *Vangelo, trasmissione, verità. Studi in onore di Enrico Cattaneo nel suo settantesimo compleanno*, ed. by A. BASTIT-KALINOWSKA – A. CARFORA (Ori Christianoi 15), Trapani 2013, 265-283, at 268-269.

⁴¹ E. LUCCHESI, *Une version copte du Sermo asceticus d'Étienne le Thébain*, AnBoll 115 (1997) 252. In his *À propos d'une édition récente des œuvres de Paul de Tamma*, SOC.C 28 (1995) 161-165, Lucchesi already expressed his doubts that the leaves in question would belong to the codex which contains the works of Paul of Tamma.

⁴² Description of the Naples fragments in G. ZOËGA, *Catalogus codicum Copticorum manu scriptorum qui in Museo Borgiano Velitris adservantur*, Rome 1810, 570 (= no. 234), and more recently in P. BUZI, *Catalogo dei manoscritti copti borgiani conservati presso la Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele III di Napoli* (Accademia dei Lincei – Memoria Ser. IX, 25/1), Rome 2009, 222-223.

⁴³ On the library of the White Monastery, see T. ORLANDI, *The Library of the Monastery of St. Shenute at Atri*, in *Perspectives on Panopolis: an Egyptian Town from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest*, ed. by A. EGBERTS – B.P. MUHS – J. VAN DER VLIET (PLB 31), Leiden 2002, 211-231; T. ORLANDI – A. SUCIU, *The End of the Library of the Monastery of Atri*, forthcoming in *Coptic Society, Literature and Religion from Late Antiquity to Modern Times. Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Coptic Studies*, Rome, September 17th-22nd, 2012, and *Plenary Reports of the Ninth International Congress of Coptic Studies*, Cairo, September 15th-19th, 2008 ed. by P. BUZI – A. CAMPLANI – F. CONTARDI (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta), Louvain expected 2015.

⁴⁴ See <http://www.cmcl.it/> (retrieved October 2015). In the CMCL database, each manuscript that has been reconstructed codicologically receives a siglum formed of the abbreviation MONB (= Monastero Bianco) followed by two letters of the Latin alphabet.

⁴⁵ The colophons of these two manuscripts were edited in A. VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Recueil des colophons des manuscrits chrétiens d'Égypte* (Bibliothèque du Muséon 1), Louvain 1929, 86-90 (= nos. 54-55).

Remnants of another Sahidic manuscript of the *Sermo asceticus* were unearthed in 1965 at Qasr el-Wizz in Nubia⁴⁶. Four almost complete parchment leaves and four other tiny fragments is all that has been preserved from this codex of small dimensions. Frags. II-III correspond to §§ 53-58 of the *Sermo asceticus*. The other two large fragments (Frags. I and IV) contain an ascetic text that has not yet been identified. The Qasr el-Wizz manuscript can be tentatively assigned to ca. 600 CE. This dating is based on the paleographical and codicological similarity of the Qasr el-Wizz fragments with a Sahidic manuscript of the Gospel of John and Acts of the Apostles, kept in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin (CBL Cpt. 814)⁴⁷. The codex came from the Monastery of Apa Jeremias, situated near Saqqara, not far from the pyramids of Giza. The Chester Beatty codex was discovered together with four other Sahidic manuscripts in a jar which also contained Byzantine coins from the reigns of Justinian, Justin and, perhaps, Maurice Tiberius⁴⁸. On the basis of these coins, which range from 568 to 602, we can date the Qasr el-Wizz fragments to the same period as the Apa Jeremias codices, that is, around the year 600.

The early dating of the Qasr el-Wizz manuscript has some far-reaching consequences. Thus, it antedates with almost three centuries *Vaticanus arabicus* 71 (dated 885), the oldest manuscript of the *Sermo asceticus* previously known. The fragments demonstrate not only that the Sahidic version of the *Sermo asceticus* is an early one, but also that the writing itself is of venerable age since it must have been in circulation already for some time before it was deemed necessary to be translated into Coptic. Furthermore, the Qasr el-Wizz fragments constitute yet another argument that Stephen of Thebes is not Stephen the Sabaite, the latter being born after the production of the manuscript to which they belonged.

One remark about the two Sahidic manuscripts is in order here before moving to a brief analysis of their text. It should be highlighted that both Coptic witnesses are acephalous and, consequently, they do not furnish the name of the author. However, we do not have serious reasons to doubt that the text was ascribed to Stephen of Thebes in Sahidic since the Coptic speaking Egyptians must have known him, as the aforementioned list of books that belonged to the Monastery of Apa Elias suggests. Thus, the ostraca that preserves the book-list mentions that the monastery possessed «a book of discourses of Apa John, Apa Stephen the Anchorite (ἀπλού στεφανος παναχωριτης) and others»⁴⁹.

The section where the two Sahidic manuscripts of the *Sermo asceticus* overlap (§§ 53-58) demonstrates that they represent two copies of the same translation, although each has its own peculiarities. With a few exceptions where the Sahidic translation is similar to the Arabic, it generally agrees more with the Greek text published by des Places, especially in those places where the Greek is longer than the Arabic. Nevertheless, the Sahidic does not follow slavishly any known Greek manuscript of *Sermo asceticus*. For example, between §§ 43-44, the Coptic version has a long passage which is not attested elsewhere⁵⁰:

ΕΚΜΟΟΣ 2ΝΤΕΚΡΙ ΜΠΕΡΚΑ ΠΕΚΗΝΤ ΕΧΙΣΕ ΝΤΟΟΤΡ ΟΥΔΕ ΜΠΕΡΧΑΣΤΡ 2ΜΠΩΦΩΧΝΕ ΜΠΕΚΗΝΤ ΟΥΔΕ ΜΠΡΤΜΑΙΟΚ ΜΑΥΔΑΚ ΣΕ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΜΟΣΤΕ ΝΝΕΤΜΑΙΟ ΜΜΟΟΥ ΜΑΥΔΑΥ· ΦΑΨΕΩΨΤ ΔΕ ΝΤΟΨ ΕΧΜΠΕΨΔΗΑ ΝΝΕΤΟΒΒΗΗ·

ΕΚΜΟΟΣ 2ΝΤΕΚΡΙ ΜΠΕΡΚΑ ΛΑΔΥ ΜΜΡΡΕ ΝΤΟΟΤΡ 2Ω ΕΠΕΣΟΟΥ ΠΕΣΟΟΥ ΕΝΕΨΒΗΨ ΤΑΡΕΚΘΩ ΕΚΜΟΤΝ· ΠΝΟΒΕ ΝΤΟΨ ΣΑΡΕΣ ΕΡΟΚ ΕΡΟΚ ΕΤΜΑΔΑ·

⁴⁶ Dr. Alexandros Tsakos (Bergen University) sent me the fragments for examination in July 2013. They will be published together with the other Sahidic manuscript fragments discovered at Qasr el-Wizz in A. TSAKOS, *Textual Finds from the Monastery at Qasr el-Wizz* (Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition 14/3), Chicago, IL, forthcoming (the reference is preliminary).

⁴⁷ The text of the *Acts of the Apostles* in this codex was published in H. THOMPSON, *The Coptic Version of the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline Epistles in the Sahidic Dialect*, Cambridge 1932. The variant readings of the text of the *Gospel of John* were recorded in H. QUECKE, *Das Johannesevangelium saidisch. Text der Handschrift PPalau Rib. Inv.-Nr. 183 mit den Varianten der Handschriften 813 und 814 der Chester Beatty Library und der Handschrift M 569* (PapyCast 11), Rome-Barcelona 1984.

⁴⁸ See H. THOMPSON, *Acts of the Apostles*, cit. (n. 47), x.

⁴⁹ R.-G. COQUIN, *Le catalogue*, cit. (n. 10), 211.

⁵⁰ The text until ἀλεην ἡρηνη μηππτέο was published and translated into Italian in Tito Orlandi's edition of the works of Paul of Tamma, see *Paolo di Tamma*, cit. (n. 39), 66, 118-119. I transcribed the few words which do not appear in Orlandi's edition from the recto of Naples, IB.9, f. 52.

ΕΚΣΜΟΟΣ ΣΠΤΕΚΡΙ ΠΡΟΣΚΑΡΤΗΡΕΙ ΕΝΕΨΙΑΗΑ ΜΝΗΕΚΝΗΣΤΙΑ ΜΝΠΑΓΩΝ ΜΠΕΚΣΗΤ ΤΑΡΕΚΕΩ ΣΠΝΑΠΤΕΒΟ ΜΠΩΗΤ· ΧΕ ΛΧΕΝ ΤΡΗΝΗ ΜΝΠΤΕΒΟ ΜΕΝΛΑΔΥ ΝΑΝΑΥ ΕΠΝΟΥΤΕ·

While you sit in your cell, do not let your mind exalt with you, nor exalt yourself in the deliberation of your mind (Sir 6,2), nor praise yourself alone, for «God hates those that praise themselves alone» (1 Clement 30.6), «but he looks at the prayer of those who are humble» (Ps 101,18).

While you sit in your cell, do not have any fetters. Finish day by day its works so that you remain calm. Guard yourself not to commit sin.

While you sit in your cell, persist in prayers, your fasting and the fight of your heart, and you shall abide in the things that belong to the purity of the heart, for without peace and purity no one will see God (cf. Heb 12,14).

Besides some biblical texts, the paragraph above quotes a passage from Clement of Rome's *Epistle to the Corinthians* (1 Clement) 30.6 (CPG 1001), a work which is preserved also in two manuscripts written in the Akhmimic dialect of Coptic,

Sermo asceticus
(Sahidic)

*1 Clement*⁵¹

1 Clement
(Akhmimic)⁵²

ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΜΟΣΤΕ ΝΝΕΤΜΑΙΟ αὐτεπαινετοὺς γὰρ μισεῖ ο θεός.
ΜΜΟΟΥ ΜΑΓΔΑΔΥ·

ΠΝΟΥΝΤΕ ΓΑΡ ΜΑΣΤΕ ΝΝΕΤΤΜΑΪΟ
ΜΜΑΓ ΟΥΔΕΕΤΟΥ·

In § 27 of the Greek *Sermo asceticus* we find another quotation from the same text, «behold Moses, who said, “I am thin-voiced (Ex 4,10), a steam from the pot (ἀτμὶς ἐκ τῆς χύτρας)»». The second part of this sentence draws on an apocryphal saying attributed to Moses in *1 Clement* 17.6, ἐγὼ δέ εἰμι ἀτμὶς ἀπὸ κύθρας⁵³. The quotations from Clement's letter indicate that the passage which is extant only in Coptic must be genuine since it shows the familiarity of Stephen of Thebes with this early Christian writing. They also add a new piece of evidence to the already rich dossier of the reception of *1 Clement* in Late Antique Egyptian Christianity⁵⁴.

Interestingly, while three of the Arabic manuscripts of the *Sermo asceticus* are of Melkite provenance, *Parisinus arabicus* 253 undoubtedly came from Coptic Egypt⁵⁵. Given that all four codices contain the same Arabic translation, which was probably made somewhere in Palestine in the ninth century, from where it was further disseminated through the Mar Sabas Monastery, it means that the Arabophone Copts borrowed the *Sermo asceticus* from the Melkites. However, it is not clear if this borrowing was made from the Egyptian Melkites, or, rather, through the intermediary of those from Syria.

Ethiopic (Gə'əz)

Be that as it may, the Arabic version was rendered into Ethiopic through the usual Egyptian channel. The Gə'əz version of the *Sermo asceticus* has survived in a *unicum*, EMMI 4493, ff. 103r-105r (dated 1528), which came from the church of Gur Sellāsē in the region of Moğā and Wadarrā (Shoa province)⁵⁶. The Arabic *Vorlage* of the Ethiopic version is readily evident. For example, in the name of the author, አስተያየስ፡ ሙስቴ፡ ተባይ፡ («Ἔστιφανος of the Land of Täbäyäsi»), ተባይ፡ is simply a transcription of the Arabic التباعي.

⁵¹ M.W. HOLMES, *The Apostolic Fathers. Greek Texts and English Translations*, Grand Rapids, MI 2007³, 84.

⁵² C. SCHMIDT, *Der erste Clemensbrief in altkoptischer Übersetzung* (TU 32/1), Leipzig 1908, 80. The other manuscript is fragmentary at this point, see F. RÖSCH, *Bruchstücke des ersten Clemensbriefes nach dem achmimischen Papyrus der Strassburger Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek mit biblischen Texten derselben Handschrift*, Strasbourg 1910.

⁵³ M.W. HOLMES, *The Apostolic Fathers*, cit. (n. 51), 68. The quotation from *1 Clement* does not appear in the Arabic and Gə'əz versions. The Georgian omits this part of the text, while the Coptic is fragmentary. For the identification of the quotation, see M. AUBINEAU, *Homélies pascales (cinq homélies inédites)* (SC 187), Paris 1972, 240 n. 39.

⁵⁴ M.W. HOLMES, *The Apostolic Fathers*, cit. (n. 51), 38.

⁵⁵ G. TROUPEAU, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes I: Manuscrits chrétiens* 1, Paris 1972, 211-212.

⁵⁶ Description of the manuscript in G. HAILE, *A Catalogue of Ethiopian Manuscripts Microfilmed for the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa and for the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, Collegeville 10, Collegeville, MN 1993*, 181-188. See also A. BAUSI, *Monastic Literature*, in *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica 3: He-N* ed. by S. UHLIG, Wiesbaden 2007, 993a-999b, at 996a. I am currently preparing the *editio princeps* of the Gə'əz version.

Like the other versions of the *Sermo asceticus*, the Ethiopic translation also has its distinctiveness. The text covers only §§ 1-78 of the Arabic version and, interestingly, ends with the first part of the quotation from the letter of Anthony/Ammonas. It is remarkable thus that the Ethiopic translation contains only that part of the letter which circulated independently as an apophthegm.

EMML 4493, f. 105r cols. b-c

መልዳም፡ አመሰ፡ ታፈታ፡ በዋ፡ ወሰተ፡ መንግሥት፡ አግዢአብዕር፡ ተጠገሥ፡ ወተወከፍ፡ ታካሣተ፡ አስመ፡ አንቀጽ፡ መቃቃን፡ ይለተ፡ መከተቻር፡ ለለግዢአብዕር፡ በተለ፡ ነጥሮ፡ መስተለ፡ ወይል፡ መቃቃው፡ ታካሣም፡ በንተ፡ ከመ፡ ይጋኅ፡ ለጋም፡ ለመ፡ ወሰተ፡ ልግብ፡ አስመ፡ የርሃጥ፡ ወመልድ፡ ለቀቃው፡ መሰቃቃውያ፡ ይመልድ፡ ፍጠና፡ መለጠይና፡ በንተ፡ ይተወሱ፡ ወይል፡ በዘገ፡ ወለት፡ ገለ፡ ትፈረ፡ ነፍሰ፡ መሰበ፡ ሌሎ፡ አግዢአብዕር፡ ከምሁ፡ ወናም፡ ለሰብለ፡ ይተዋና፡ መይረ፡ (col. c) ተተለ፡ አበሳሁ፡ መይረሰቦ፡ ወሰሰ፡ መለከተ፡ መይሁ፡ አቃቦ፡ ዘዴቅቦ፡ በተለ፡ ፍጥወሁ፡ አስከ፡ ይጋኅ፡ መሰተ፡ መከነ፡ ይረፍተ፡ መሰበ፡ ሌሎ፡ ለይጠና፡ ቁቃቦ፡ ዘዴቅቦ፡ ህልወ፡ ወሰሰ፡ እየከል፡ ቁርቦ፡ ተብሃ፡ እስመ፡ ይጋኅ፡ ለጋኅ፡ ወሰሰ፡ ተብሃ፡ ይይል፡ ዘዴቅቦ፡ ወይልዕ፡ አጥቀር፡ ትፈረ፡ እንተ፡ ከመ፡ ይጋኅ፡ ይለተ፡ ይይል፡ ወሰብተ፡ ለለግዢአብዕር፡ መሰልይ፡ ይከተ፡ ማህለ፡ መምሳረቻ፡ አስከ፡ ለዓለም፡ አግኋ፡

My son, if you want to enter the kingdom of the Lord, endure and accept the tribulations, «because the gate is narrow» (Matt 7,14), and «love the Lord with all your soul and all your power» (Matt 22,37). It is suitable that you seek this so that the fear of his name shall be firm in your heart. Because fear engenders grief, and grief engenders joy, and on account of this, we are granted straightaway a great power; this time the soul brings fruit. And when the Lord has seen such a beautiful thing, he kindly receives the person, forgives all his sins, establishes him with the angels, and he gives him a guardian that guards him on all his ways until he reaches the place of rest. And when Satan has seen him, (namely) the guardian that guards him being with him, he is not able to approach him because he sees with him this power that surrounds him. Behold, o my beloved, struggle therefore to acquire that power. Glory to God and may benevolence and mercy be upon us forever, Amen⁵⁷.

As the text ends *ex abrupto*, we may conclude either that the Ethiopian translator shortened the text, or that the Arabic translation circulated under various forms and that the Gə'əz is based on a redaction different from the one published by Sauget.

Finally, the beginning of *Sermo asceticus* § 37 is included as an anonymous apophthegm in the Gə'əz ascetic collection *Gädlä Abäw Qəddusan*⁵⁸. It is likely that this saying also has an Arabic *Vorlage*.

2.2. Commandments

Incipit (recensio B), Πρῶτον μέν, μὴ ἔχε κοινωνίαν μετὰ γυναικῶν, ἵνα μὴ κατακαῆς εἰς τὸ πῦρ αὐτῶν.

Recensio A	Greek	Recensio B	Recensio C
1. Paris, BnF Grec 1598, f. 135r-v	1. Athens, Hist. and Palaeogr.		1. Madrid, El Escorial X. IV. 25, ff.
2. London, BL Burney 50 volume	Arch. 6, f.154r-v		17r-18v
2, ff. 125v-126r	2. Athos, Iviron 408, f. 277r-v		2. Venice, Marc. gr. app. II.69
	3. Athens, EBE 440, pp. 58-59		(coll. 438), ff. 93v-94r
	4. Moscow, Synodal Greek 271, ff.		3. Athens, EBE 522, f. 167r
	36r-37r		
	5. Athos, Amorgos, <i>sine numero</i> , f.		
	248r-v		
	6. Moscow, Synodal Greek 416, ff.		
	303v-304r		
	7. Moscow, Synodal Greek 409, ff.		
	31v-32r		
	8. Athos, Vatopedi 472, ff. 196v-		

⁵⁷ I am grateful to Alessandro Bausi for suggesting me a few improvements for the translation.

⁵⁸ V. ARRAS, *Geronticon* (CSCO.Ae 79-80), Louvain 1986, 1: 291 (Gə'əz text), 2: 198 (Latin translation).

197r
9. Paris, BnF Supplément grec
1329, ff. 124v-125v
10. St. Petersburg, NLR Ms Gr.
572, ff. 3r-4r
11. Jerusalem, Holy Sepulcher no.
170, f. 1r
12. Jerusalem, Holy Sepulcher no.
215, f. 167v-168r

MSS not checked

1. Athos, Skete of St. Anna 8
2. Athos, Dionysiou 232
3. Athos, Iviron 329
4. Athens, Panepistemion, Theologikon Spoudasterion 24, f. 248r-v
5. Samos, Metropolitan Library MS 66, pp. 309-310
6. Patras, Monastery of St. Panton MS 5, 162v-163r
7. Jerusalem, St. Sabas no. 162, f. 447v
8. Jerusalem, St. Sabas no. 378, f. 137r

Old Slavonic

Cf. VEDER, *Стефан Тивејски*, 165-166 (lists twenty-three MSS)

The *Commandments* (Ἐντολαί) are extant in Greek and old Slavonic. This is the shortest text of Stephen of Thebes, being formed of brief apodictic precepts meant for the accomplishment of solitary life. We do not have serious reasons to doubt its authenticity, although the surviving Greek manuscripts seem to suggest a long process of rewriting.

The Greek text was published in 1913 by Diobouniotis, who produced a single manuscript edition, based on a codex from the Amorgos Monastery, apparently dated to the eleventh century⁵⁹. However, the manuscripts of the *Commandments* are numerous, this being by far the best attested writing of Stephen of Thebes. The manuscript tradition can broadly be categorized into three types that mirror three different redactions of the text.

A) The type A redaction is included in the Sabaitic collection of *Apophthegmata Patrum*⁶⁰, represented by Paris, BnF Grec 1598, f. 135r-v⁶¹ and London, British Library Burney 50 volume 2, ff. 125v-126r. A text similar to the redaction A was known to the author of the longer version of *De octo cogitationibus* (CPG 3975), attributed to Ephrem. Joseph Simon Assemani published this ascetic writing in his *editio romana* of the works of Ephrem after two Vatican manuscripts, *Vaticanus graecus* 375 (fourteenth century) and *Palatinus graecus* 91 (thirteenth century)⁶². A supplementary manuscript having the same writing is *Monacensis graecus* 25, ff. 187v-190r⁶³. A Slavonic version also exists⁶⁴.

⁵⁹ C. DIOBOUNIOTIS, Στέφανος ὁ Σαβαῖτης 1, cit. (n. 5), 11. The inventory number of this manuscript is not known.

⁶⁰ On this collection, see J.-C. GUY, *Recherches sur la tradition grecque des Apophthegmata Patrum* (SHG 36), Bruxelles 1984², 221-230; B. DAHLMAN, *The Sabaitic Collection of the Apophthegmata Patrum*, in ΔΩΡΟΠΟΙΟΙΚΙΑΟΝ: *Studies in Honour of Jan Olof Rosenqvist* ed. by D. SEARBY – B. WITAKOWSKA – J. HELDT (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia 12), Uppsala 2012, 133-146.

⁶¹ This manuscript is wrongly indicated as «Grec 1548» in J. DARROUZES, *Étienne le Thébain*, cit. (n. 1), 1525.

⁶² J.S. ASSEMANI, *Sancti patris nostri Ephraem Syri opera omnia quae exstant Graece, Syriace, Latine 2/2*, Rome 1743, 428-432. Description of *Palatinus graecus* 91 in H. STEVENSON, *Codices manuscripti Palatini Graeci Bibliothecae Vaticanae*, Rome 1885, 44-46.

⁶³ V. TIFTIXOGLU, *Katalog der griechischen Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek München 1: Codices graeci Monacenses 1-55*, Wiesbaden 2004, 195.

⁶⁴ G. PARPULOV, *Pre-1650 Cyrillic Manuscripts in U.S. Public Collections: A Catalogue*, *Paleoslavica* 18 (2010) 1-53, at 12.

Assemani already noticed that portions of this text are found elsewhere in two other writings attributed to Ephrem, that is, the shorter version of *De octo cogitationibus* (CPG 3956) and *De perfectione monachi* (CPG 3971)⁶⁵. To these sources, we may now add the *Commandments* of Stephen of Thebes⁶⁶.

Stephen of Thebes
(*Recensio A*)

Μὴ ἀγαπήσῃς ἀπέρχεσθαι εἰς τὰς πόλεις, ὅτι καθαρός ἔστη, ἔαν μὴ ἰδης πονηρά.

μὴ πίνε οίνον εἰς μέθην, ἵνα μὴ ποιήσῃς τὴν καρδίαν σου μαίνεσθαι εἰς τὴν ἡδονήν.

μὴ φάγης δεύτερον τῆς ἡμέρας χωρὶς ἀνάγκης, ἵνα μὴ παχυνθῇ σου τὸ σῶμα, καὶ παχυνθῶσι σου τὰ πάθη.

μὴ κλείσῃς τὴν θύραν σου ἐπὶ ξένων ἀδελφῶν, ἵνα μὴ ὁ Κύριος κλείσῃ τὴν θύραν αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ σοι, **ὅτι ἐν φιλέτρῳ μετρεῖς, ἀντιμετρηθήσεται σοι**⁶⁷.

ἐπισκέπτου τοὺς ἀρρώστους, ἵνα ὁ Θεός ἐπισκέψεται σε. μὴ πολλὰ κοιμηθῆς, ἀλλ' αἴτησαι ἀδιαλείπτως τὴν βοήθειαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἵνα φύγης ὡσπερ δρνεον ἐκ παγίδος.

μὴ πολυλόγει, ἵνα μὴ ἐμπέσῃς εἰς ψεῦδος.

μὴ κτήσῃς σεαυτὸν ὑπὲρ τὴν χρείαν σου, ἀλλὰ ζῆσον ἐν βίῳ μετρίῳ.

ἥσυχαζε καὶ τὰ ἴδια πράττε. ὅλη τῇ δυνάμει σου κράτει τῆς γλώττης. ἔχε ταπεινοφροσύνην. ἔχε πραότητα εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους. γενοῦ νεκρός, ἵνα ζῆσῃς. πᾶσαν θλῖψιν ἔχε πρὸ ὄφθαλμῶν σού, ἵνα κληρονομήσῃς τὴν αἰώνιον ζωήν.

Ps.-Ephrem

Μὴ ἀγαπήσῃς ἀπέρχεσθαι εἰς τὰς πόλεις. Τέαν γάρ μὴ ἰδης πονηρά, ἔσῃ καθαρός.

μὴ πίνε οίνον εἰς μέθην, ἵνα μὴ ποιήσῃς τὴν καρδίαν σου μαίνεσθαι εἰς τὰς ἡδονάς.

μὴ φάγης δεύτερον τῆς ἡμέρας, ἵνα μὴ παχυνθῇ σου τὸ σῶμα, καὶ σύν αὐτῷ τὰ πάθη.

μὴ κλήσῃς τὴν θύραν σου ἐπὶ ξένων, ὅτι ἐν φιλέτρῳ μετρεῖς, ἀντιμετρηθήσεται σοι.

ἐπισκέπτου τοὺς ἀρρώστους, ἵνα καὶ σὲ ἐπισκέψεται ὁ Θεός.

μὴ πολλὰ κοιμᾶ, ἀλλ' αἴτησαι ἀδιαλείπτως τὴν βοήθειαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἵνα φύγης ὡσπερ δρνεον ἐκ παγίδος.

μὴ πολυλόγει, ἵνα μὴ ἐμπέσῃς εἰς ψεῦδος.

μὴ κτήσῃς σεαυτὸν ὑπὲρ τὴν χρείαν σου, ἀλλὰ ζῆσον ἐν βίῳ μετρίῳ.

ἥσυχαζε καὶ τὰ ἴδια πράττε. ὅλη δυνάμει κράτει γλώσσης καὶ κοιλίας. ἔχε ταπεινοφροσύνην. γίνου ὡς ἀγνοῶν καὶ ιδιώτης. ἔχε πραότητα εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους. πολλὴν ζημιάν ἥγου ἐκ τοῦ λαλεῖν καὶ γελᾶν. ἀνήρ δὲ φρόνιμος ήσυχιαν ἔχει πάντοτε τὴν θλῖψιν καὶ τὸν θάνατον ἔχει πρὸ ὄφθαλμῶν σου, καὶ μηδέποτε ἀπελπίσῃς πειρασμόν. ἔξεταζε σεαυτὸν ἐσπέρας καὶ πρωΐ πᾶς παρῆλθες, ταῦτα δὲ ἄνευ κόπου κατορθῶσαι ἀδύνατον.

It seems likely that the author of *De octo cogitationibus* borrowed from the *Commandments* of Stephen of Thebes, more precisely from a text close to the type A redaction. The following evidence supports this hypothesis:

1. The two texts omit ὁ ὄφθαλμός in the first rule quoted above, unlike the other two redactions of the *Commandments*;
2. They equally omit a cluster of three rules after μὴ πολυλόγει, ἵνα μὴ ἐμπέσῃς εἰς ψεῦδος;
3. Compared to the other redactions of the *Commandments*, they have a completely different material after the eighth rule quoted hereby.

The last point above requires further clarification. While it seems plausible that Ps.-Ephrem took this long passage from Stephen of Thebes' *Commandments*, the final section of the type A manuscripts, which starts with the words ήσυχαζε καὶ τὰ ἴδια πράττε, was probably in its turn the product of a later editorial work. The section in question does not feature in the other two redactions of the *Commandments*, something which suggests that it is an interpolation proper to the type A manuscripts. Furthermore, some of these commandments resemble certain passages from the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, although a direct influence cannot be ascertained. For example, the phrase ὅλη τῇ δυνάμει σου κράτει τῆς γλώττης, sounds similar to a saying attributed to Mattoes in the alphabetic collection of the

⁶⁵ Cf. also D. HEMMERDINGER-ILLIADOU, *Ephrem. Les versions*, I. *Ephrem Grec*, in DSp 4, 800-815, at 809.

⁶⁶ There are other passages interpolated in the long version of the *De octo cogitationibus*, but this issue would deserve a separate study.

⁶⁷ The bold text, in fact a quotation from Matt 7,2, is not attested in the *recensio A*, but it features in the type B manuscripts of the *Commandments*.

*Apophthegmata*⁶⁸, γενοῦ νεκρός, ἵνα ζῆσῃς resembles an apophthegm about Macarius⁶⁹, while πᾶσαν θλίψιν ἔχε πρὸ ὄφθαλμῶν σοῦ appears also in an anonymous saying⁷⁰.

B) The type B class is the best attested in the manuscript tradition. In these codices, the *Commandments* are normally followed by the *Diataxis* attributed to Stephen of Thebes and preceded by Ps.-Athanasius of Alexandria's *Sermo pro iis qui saeculo renuntiarunt* (CPG 2287; PG 28, coll. 1409-1420). As Jean Kirchmeyer pointed out, this text attributed to Athanasius is actually nothing else than the *Logos IX* of Abba Isaiah⁷¹. The fact that these three ascetical writings appear together in the type B manuscripts indicates that they were meant to form a corpus of ascetic precepts.

The title of the *Commandments* in the type B manuscripts is uniformly given as Ἐντολαὶ τοῖς ἀποτασσομένοις. Interestingly, the same lemma introduces also the aforementioned *Logos IX* of Abba Isaiah in some manuscripts⁷². In Syriac, the title in question, ﻂﻠـ ﻢـ ﻢـ ﻢـ ﻢـ ﻢـ ﻢـ, appears in the most ancient codices (sixth-seventh centuries) that contain the writings of Isaiah of Scetis⁷³. This clearly shows that the Greek tradition of this title, on which the Syriac is based, must be very old. It is therefore tempting to speculate that this title did not originally belong to the *Commandments* of Stephen of Thebes, but it was attached to it only later because the text follows in the type B manuscripts Ps.-Athanasius', scil. Isaiah of Scetis', homonymous discourse. Therefore, it is not surprising that in Vatopedi 472 (fourteenth century) the text of Ps.-Athanasius is attributed to Stephen of Thebes, Τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Στεφάνου τοῦ Θηβαίου ἐντολαὶ λίαν ὠφέλημαι τοῖς ἀποτασσομένοις. This is followed by the *Commandments* and the *Diataxis*, both lemmatized Τοῦ ἀτροῦ. Last but not least, the proximity of Stephen of Thebes and Isaiah of Scetis in these ascetic collections, even if the latter is disguised under the name of Athanasius of Alexandria, demonstrates once more the connection between the two Egyptian ascetic authors.

C) The type C redaction is represented by a smaller number of manuscripts, which includes Venice, Marciana gr. app. II.69 (coll. 438), ff. 93v-94v (thirteenth-fourteenth centuries)⁷⁴ and Madrid, El Escorial X. IV. 25 (Andrés 420), ff. 17r-18r (fourteenth century)⁷⁵. Athens, EBE 522, f. 167r seems to contain an abridgement of this redaction⁷⁶. In the type C codices, the *Commandments* feature without the *Diataxis* and Ps.-Athanasius' *Sermo*. Some of the manuscripts of this type number the commandments from one to twelve, this division of the work being reflected in the lemmata. For example, the El Escorial manuscript introduces the text as Τοῦ ἀββᾶ Στεφάνου κεφάλαια ιβ⁷⁷, and the

⁶⁸ AP/Syst I.34; AP/Alph Matoës 11. Greek text in PG 65, col. 293B. French translation in L. REGNAULT, *Les sentences des Pères du désert 4: Collection alphabétique*, Sablé-sur-Sarthe 1981, 197; J.-C. GUY, *Les apophthegmes des Pères. I-IX*, cit. (n. 20), 120-121; F. NAU, *Histoires des solitaires égyptiens*, ROC 17 (1912) 204-211, at 210. The parallel with the saying of Matoës is even more precise in Ps.-Ephrem: Ὁλη δυνάμει κράτει γλώσσης καὶ κοιλίας.

⁶⁹ PG 65, col. 272. Cf. also Barsanuphius and John, *Letter* 52 in F. NEYT – P. DE ANGELIS-NOAH – L. REGNAULT, *Barsanuphe et Jean de Gaza. Correspondance 1/1* (SC 426), Paris 1997, 268.

⁷⁰ F. NAU, *Histoires des solitaires égyptiens*, ROC 18 (1913) 137-146, at 146 (= no. 398). Interestingly, the end of the *De octo cogitationibus*, ταῦτα δὲ ἄνευ κόπου κατορθῶσαι ἀδύνατον, is also based on the abovementioned apophthegm, which seems to indicate that Ps.-Ephrem knew a manuscript of the *Commandments* that contained an even longer text.

⁷¹ J. KIRCHMEYER, *À propos d'un texte du Pseudo-Athanase*, RAM 40 (1964) 311-313.

⁷² Cf. R. DRAGUET, CSCO.S 120, cit. (n. 18), 23; CSCO.S 122, cit. (n. 18), 15. This title features in Paris, *Coislinianus* 123 (eleventh century); Oxford, Bodleian Library Cromwell 14 (thirteenth century); Venice, *Marcianus* 132 (thirteenth century); Moscow, Historical Museum 320 (twelfth century).

⁷³ Cf. R. DRAGUET, CSCO.S 120, cit. (n. 18), 22. London, BL Or. Add. 12.170 (604 CE); Milan, Ambrosiana A 296 inf, ff. 12-17 + Sinai, Syriac 26, ff. 1-154 (sixth century); London, BL Add. 14.575 (seventh century).

⁷⁴ E. MIONI, *Bibliothecae Divi Marci Venetiarum codices graeci manuscripti 1: Codices in classes a prima usque ad quintam inclusi pars 1: Classis I-Classis II, Codd. 1-120* (Indici e cataloghi NS 6), Rome 1967, 194.

⁷⁵ G. DE ANDRÉS MARTÍNEZ, *Catálogo de los códices griegos de la Real Biblioteca de El Escorial 2*, Madrid 1965, 356.

⁷⁶ P. SOTEROUDES, Ο κώδ. 522 τῆς Εθνικῆς Βιβλιοθήκης τῆς Ελλάδος, Ελληνικά 46 (1996) 153-159, at 157.

⁷⁷ G. DE ANDRÉS MARTÍNEZ, *Catálogo*, cit. (n. 75), 356.

Marcianus as Τοῦ ἐν ἀγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν ἀββᾶ Στεφάνου ἐντολαὶ ἡβ'. Another possible witness of the same tradition is Athos, Dionysiou 232, in which our text is headed by the lemma Ἐντολαὶ ἡβ' ⁷⁸.

The text of the *Commandments* is in some regards different in these manuscripts. Among other things, it lacks the first two words of the *incipit*, Πρῶτον μὲν. Similarly, it adds at the end of the first commandment, after «do not have friendship with the chiefs of the place», the phrase «but listen to their words and do not act according to his (sic!) works».

The Slavonic manuscript tradition of the *Commandments* is also very prolific⁷⁹. Veder has edited this version, which features in the *Paterik Skitskij*, one of the Slavonic versions of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*⁸⁰. The *Commandments* follows the *Collatio XII anachoretarum* (CPG 5563) in this collection. Veder believes that the translation of the *Commandments* into Slavonic was made very early, probably during the period of Cyril and Methodius' missionary activity in Moravia (863-885). It is important to note that the Slavonic version is based on a type C Greek exemplar.

In the absence of any conclusive evidence, it would be hazardous to speculate concerning the genealogy of the three redactions identifiable in the manuscripts. It is well possible that the first redaction of the *Commandments* described here went through a laborious editorial revision, during which a few rules were eliminated and an interpolation formed of passages taken from the *Apophthegmata* was appended at the end of the text.

Relationship of the First Commandment with Other Ascetica

As I have already indicated, it is possible that among the sources used in this interpolation features also a saying ascribed to Mattoes in the systematic collection of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*. The identification of the parallel adds a further nuance, because the beginning of the *Commandments* in all three redactions available resembles yet another passage in the same apophthegm:

AP/Syst Mattoes 11

μὴ ἔχε φιλίαν μετὰ παιδίου, μήτε γνῶσιν μετὰ γυναικός,

Stephen of Thebes (Recensio B)

μὴ ἔχε κοινωνίαν μετὰ γυναικῶν, ἵνα μὴ κατακαῆς εἰς τὸ πῦρ αὐτῶν,

μήτε μετὰ μικροῦ παιδίου, ἵνα μὴ ἐμπέσῃς εἰς τὴν παγίδα αὐτοῦ.

μὴ ἔχε κοινωνίαν μετὰ ἀρχόντων τοῦ τόπου.

As illustrated in the table above, although the two passages are similar to a certain extent, we do not seem to deal with a direct influence in this case. One can observe that both insist on avoiding relationships with woman and children⁸¹, but, while Stephen forbids also the relations with «the rulers of the place» (ἀρχόντων τοῦ τόπου), the saying of Abba Mattoes says not to befriend heretics. It seems reasonable to assume that «the rulers of the place» (type B MSS) or «the chiefs of the place» (types A and C MSS), which are mentioned in the *Commandments*, actually refer to the monastic leaders⁸².

Some such sayings concerning the avoidance of women, children and heads of the monasteries are popular in the ascetic literature. For example, an anonymous apophthegm from Paris, *Coislinianus* 126 says, μὴ ἔχε φιλίαν μετὰ ἡγουμένου, μηδὲ δώσῃς καὶ λάβῃς μετὰ γυναικός, μηδὲ εὐποιήσῃς μετὰ

⁷⁸ For this information I rely on S.P. LAMPROS, *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts on Mount Athos* 1, Cambridge 1895, 379.

⁷⁹ The list of manuscripts used by Veder for his edition can be found in W. VEDER, Стефан Тивејски, cit. (n. 3), 165-166.

⁸⁰ W. VEDER, *Stephen of Thebes*, cit. (n. 3). English translation of the old Slavonic together with Diobouniotis' Greek text in J.G. VAN DER TAK – W. VEDER, *Patericon Sceticum. Greek Text, Latin Translations of the 6th C., English Translation of the Slavonic Textus Receptus* (Pegasus Oost-Europese Studies 13), Amsterdam 2012, 640-641.

⁸¹ This is a common topic in the monastic literature of Lower Egypt, analyzed in L. REGNAULT, *La vie quotidienne*, cit. (n. 15), 39-51.

⁸² Τόπος is one of the common terms which designate a monastic establishment in Egyptian sources.

μειρακίου⁸³. Similarly, in the *Commandment of an Elder from Scetis about the Good Fight* (ΟΥΓΕΝΤΟΛΗ ΝΤΕ[ΟΥ]ΣΔΛΟ ΝΔΙΗΤ ΣΤΕ[Ε] ΠΕΧΡΟ ΕΤΝΑΝΟΥ[Ψ]), which is preserved in a single Sahidic manuscript⁸⁴, we find a similar ascetic rule, ΜΠΡΩΒΗΡ ΕΚΟΓΓ· ΟΥΔΕ ΜΠΡ† ΣΒΩ ΝΔΣ[Ι]ΜΕ· ΠΩΤ ΕΒΟΛ Ν[Τ]ΜΝΤΜΑΪΔΡΧΩ[Ν·]⁸⁵ («Do not become friend with a child, nor teach a woman. Run away from the love of rulers»). In this version of the saying we encounter once more the triad women – children – rulers, which is employed also by Stephen of Thebes and the anonymous apophthegm from *Coislinianus* 126. It is important to remark that the Coptic text seemingly contains a mistranslation of the Greek original. Thus, the Sahidic † ΣΒΩ, «to teach», apparently stands for γνῶσις, which appears, for example, in the apophthegm ascribed to Matoes, μήτε γνῶσιν μετὰ γυναικὸς, with the sense «to have acquaintance with».

Similar sayings appear in other Egyptian ascetic sources connected to Lower Egypt⁸⁶. The fact that the form of the saying in the *Commandments of Stephen of Thebes* is closer to the anonymous saying of *Coislinianus* 126 and the *Commandment of an Elder from Scetis* than to the apophthegm of Matoes seems to suggest that the latter is not its immediate source.

Although it is possible that these texts have direct literary connections with each other, it is questionable in which direction the influence runs. In my opinion, it should be rather highlighted that this issue is less relevant than the fact that they clearly indicate that Stephen of Thebes' writings are fostered by the same ascetic spirituality than the one that perspires in the *Apophthegmata* and other ascetic sources from Lower Egypt.

2.3. Diataxis

Incipit, Πρὸ πάντων χρήζομεν τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην ἐν παντὶ ἔτοιμοι ὄντες.

Greek	Old Slavonic
1. Athos, Amorgos, <i>sine numero</i> , ff. 249r-261r	Cf. VEDER, Стефан Тибейски, 168 (lists seven
2. Athos, Iviron 408, ff. 277ff.	MSS)
3. Athos, Vatopedi 472, ff. 197r-202r	
4. Athens, EBE 440, pp. 59-63	
5. Firenze, Laurentianus Plut. IX, 16, ff. 79v-81r	
6. Moscow, Synodal Greek 409, ff. 32ff.	
7. Moscow, Synodal Greek 271, ff. 37ff.	
8. Moscow, Synodal Greek, 416, ff. 304ff.	
9. Saint Petersburg, NLR Ms Gr. 572, ff. 4ff.	
10. Jerusalem, St. Sabbas 378	

⁸³ Greek text in F. NAU, *Histoires des solitaires égyptiens*, ROC 12 (1907) 393-413, at 403 (= no. 125). Cf. also L. REGNAULT, *Les sentences des Pères du désert 5: Série des anonymes* (Spiritualité Orientale 43), Sablé-sur-Sarthe 2005, 47 (= no. 125).

⁸⁴ P. Cotsen-Princeton 1, a miniature Sahidic parchment manuscript that contains school exercises for apprentice scribes. Among other texts, the codex features *ascetica*, including the *Commandment of an Elder from Scetis about the Good Fight*. The manuscript has not yet been edited, but a facsimile is available in S. BUCKING, *Practice Makes Perfect. P. Cotsen-Princeton 1 and the Training of Scribes in Byzantine Egypt*, Los Angeles, CA 2011; see also the preliminary report of the same author in *A Sahidic Coptic Manuscript in the Private Collection of Lloyd E. Cotsen (P. Cotsen 1) and the Limits of Papyrological Interpretation*, Journal of Coptic Studies 8 (2006) 55-78.

⁸⁵ S. BUCKING, *Practice Makes Perfect*, cit. (n. 84), 212 (= plate 98).

⁸⁶ For example, in Isaiah of Scetis' Greek *Logos* IX (= Syriac *Logos* V), μὴ συνεσθίης μετὰ γυναικός, μὴ ἔχε φιλίαν μετὰ παιδίου, or in an anonymous apophthegm of the systematic collection, Μή λάβῃς, μηδὲ δώσῃς μετὰ κοσμικοῦ, καὶ μὴ σχῆς γνῶσιν μετὰ γυναικός, καὶ μὴ ἔχε παρρησίαν ἐπὶ πολὺ μετὰ παιδίου. For the text of Abba Isaiah, see A. IORDANITES, Αββᾶ Ἡσαΐων, cit. (n. 18), 63; R. DRAGUET, CSCO.S 122, cit. (n. 18), 16. This passage circulated also as an apophthegm (AP/Syst V.53), see J.-C. GUY, *Les apophthegmes des Pères. I-IX*, cit. (n. 20), 306-309. The saying appears also in the Arabic *Præcepta seu consilia posita tironibus in monachatu*, see J.-M. SAUGET, *La double recension arabe des Præceptes aux novices de l'abbé Isaïe de Scété*, in *Mélanges Eugène Tisserant* 3 (StT 233), Vatican 1964, 299-356, at 314-315 (text), 342 (translation). For the text of the anonymous apophthegm, see J.-C. GUY, *Les apophthegmes des Pères. X-XVI*, cit. (n. 20), 96-97.

The *Diataxis* has survived in Greek and Slavonic. This work contains advices for the monks, being in terms of length shorter than the *Sermo asceticus*, but longer than the *Commandments*. Diobouniotis published the Greek text for the first time after the same eleventh-century manuscript from the Amorgos Monastery on which he based his edition of the *Commandments*⁸⁷.

Darrouzès made the first attempt to compile an inventory of the manuscripts that preserve the *Diataxis*. It should be highlighted that this work appears almost exclusively in the type A manuscripts, in which it was copied after the *Commandments*. As far as I am aware, only *Laurentianus* Plut. IX, 16 (fourteenth century)⁸⁸, has the *Diataxis* without the *Commandments*.

The Slavonic version has recently been edited by Veder on the basis of seven manuscripts ranging from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries⁸⁹. According to Veder, the Slavonic translation was made somewhere in Bulgaria between 886 and 971 and follows slavishly the Greek original.

The Diataxis and the Logoi of Isaiah of Scetis

Sauget remarked that almost the entire *Diataxis* is a compilation from the Greek *Logoi* III and IV (= Syriac *Logoi* X-XI) of Abba Isaiah of Scetis⁹⁰. However, for the final part of the *Diataxis* no correspondent has been found until now in the *Asceticon*. Here is the text in question:

Ἐστι δὲ ὅπλα τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ ἄρματα ἡ ἐκκοπὴ τοῦ ιδίου θελήματος καὶ ταπείνωσις καὶ ὑπακοή, ἥτις ἐστὶν ἀληθῆς ὑποταγὴ. ἔαν δὲ ἡ ψυχὴ τούτων τῶν τριῶν ἀρετῶν στερηθῇ, εὐθέως παραλαμβάνεται ὑπὸ τῶν δαιμόνων ὡς πόλις ὑπὸ πολεμίων μὴ ἔχουσα ὅπλα. διὰ τοῦτο καλὸν τὸ νήφειν πάντοτε καὶ γρηγορεῖν καὶ προσδέχεσθαι ἡμᾶς ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ μετὰ φύσουν καὶ πίστεως εὐλικρινοῦν. ἔξαιρέτως δὲ λέγειν μετά δακρύνων τὴν προσημανθεῖσαν εὐχήν, δέσποτα κύριε Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ, σὺ βοηθός μου εἶ, ὅτι τῷ θεῷ πρέπει δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.

Veder has recently challenged Sauget's hypothesis, suggesting that it was rather Abba Isaiah who borrowed from Stephen of Thebes, and not vice versa⁹¹. He has affirmed that «the latter (i.e. Isaiah of Scetis) is, in fact, more of a collector and compiler than an author; whenever he is involved in a controversy of attribution, it is his authorship that should be questioned, not that of the other»⁹².

I agree that the *Asceticon* of Abba Isaiah raises a series of problems related to the authorship, especially concerning the role of Peter, the disciple of Isaiah, who presumably acted as the editor of the *Logoi*. While it is true that the literary corpus of Isaiah of Scetis represents in a way the coronation and systematization of the ascetic literature of Lower Egypt, being fostered by the teachings of the desert fathers and mothers who lived before him, I am not persuaded by the argument that Stephen of Thebes influenced the author of the *Asceticon*. By their style, content and terminology, the *Logoi* III and IV align well with the other writings that belong to the ascetic corpus of Abba Isaiah. For example, the unidentified fragment quoted above metaphorically compares the demons' attacks of the soul to a city ambushed by enemies. This comparison appears elsewhere in the *Asceticon*⁹³. Besides, the text refers to the three virtues of the soul, which is an idea often developed by Abba Isaiah and probably stemming from him⁹⁴. Agreeing that further study is warranted in order to verify the situation, all these details make me adhere to the *consensus opinionum multorum* that the *Diataxis* does not belong to Stephen of Thebes but it is rather a compilation from the *Logoi* of Isaiah of Scetis.

⁸⁷ C. DIOBOUNIOTIS, Στέφανος ὁ Σαβαῖτης 1, cit. (n. 5), 11-12; IDEM, Στέφανος ὁ Σαβαῖτης 2, cit. (n. 5), 10-13.

⁸⁸ A.M. BANDINI, *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum bibliothecae Mediceae Laurentianae varia continens opera Graecorum partum* 1, Florence 1764, 414.

⁸⁹ Inventory of manuscripts in W. VEDER, *Смѣртъ Тибѣйскіи*, cit. (n. 3), 168.

⁹⁰ J.-M. SAUGET, *Étienne le Thébain*, cit. (n. 7), 368 and J. DARROUZES, *Étienne le Thébain*, cit. (n. 1), 1525, already remarked that the *Diataxis* incorporates material from Abba Isaiah's Greek *Logos* III (= Syriac *Logos* X).

⁹¹ W. VEDER, *Stephen of Thebes*, cit. (n. 3); F. BÁLAN, *Asceticon*, cit. (n. 31), adheres to the same view.

⁹² W. VEDER, *Stephen of Thebes*, cit. (n. 3).

⁹³ Cf., e.g., the Greek *Logos* IV in A. IORDANITES, Ἀββᾶ Ἡσαΐōν, cit. (n. 18), 23-24; *Logos* VII in *Ibid.*, 51; *Logos* XXV in *Ibid.*, 162.

⁹⁴ The Greek *Logos* VII treats precisely this topic.

2.4) *On the All-Night Vigils*

Incipit, يا اخوة لا تتوانوا عن قراءة المزامير المفروزة في السواعي, «O brothers, do not relent reciting the psalms allocated to the prayers of the hours»⁹⁵.

Old Slavonic

Cf. VEDER, *Stephen of Thebes* (lists six MSS)
L'viv, Stefanyk Scientific Library MB 1269, ff. 189v-191v

Arabic

1. Jerusalem, St. Mark's Monastery, MS 167, ff. 132r-135r (Garšūni)
2. Paris, BnF Arabe 139, ff. 327r-329v
3. Tripoli, University of Balamand MS 117, ff. 138v-140v

Veder has pointed out that a short text entitled *On the All-Night Vigils* has survived under Stephen of Thebes' name in Slavonic⁹⁶. He has prepared an edition and English translation based on two fifteenth-century manuscripts, Moscow, RGB F.304 nos. 156 and 171. Four other codices preserving the same writing has remained inaccessible to him⁹⁷. To the inventory of Slavonic manuscripts, one must add L'viv, Stefanyk Scientific Library MB 1269, ff. 189v-191v (sixteenth century)⁹⁸.

In its current form, the text is an edifying story about the Sunday all-night vigils. Two monks that have the bad habit to slumber during the vigils are trying to convince their fellow monastics that they are actually having ecstatic experiences, during which they see angels and saints descending on the altar. A brother from another country, who celebrates properly the night vigils and is aware that his two fellows are lying, replies that one night, while he was in the church, he fell asleep and dreamt that a beautiful saint entered and woke up one by one all the slumbering monks.

Actually, this story is just an excerpt from the *Life of Stephen the Sabaite* (BHG 1670), an early ninth-century writing attributed to Leontius of Damascus. The biography of Stephen of Mar Sabas is preserved in Greek only in a single acephalous manuscript (Paris, BnF, *Coislinianus graecus* 303)⁹⁹, but a complete version is extant in Arabic in two codices from Sinai¹⁰⁰. The portion attested in Slavonic corresponds to §§ 162-163 of the Greek original (= Arabic §§ 72.5-10)¹⁰¹.

What is more, excerpts similar to the one we find in Slavonic circulated in various forms in Arabic and Georgian. The Arabic is slightly longer, including also the next story in Stephen the Sabaite's *vita*, which features a certain Abba Joseph. John C. Lamoreaux lists two manuscripts that contain this Arabic excerpt from the *Life of Stephen the Sabaite*, Paris, BnF Arabe 139, ff. 327r-329v^{and} Tripoli, University of Balamand MS 117, ff. 138v-140v¹⁰². Additionally, a third copy exists in a nineteenth-century Garšūni manuscript from St. Mark's Monastery, Jerusalem (MS 167, ff. 132r-135r)¹⁰³. In the tenth century, John

⁹⁵ Paris, BnF Arabe 139, f. 327r. See G. TROUPEAU, *Catalogue 1*, cit. (n. 55), 101.

⁹⁶ W. VEDER, *Stephen of Thebes*, cit. (n. 3).

⁹⁷ These are Moscow, GIM Sin. 193; Sin. 652; Sin 935; Sin. 953, which range between the fourteenth and the eighteenth centuries.

⁹⁸ The codex is catalogued in OLIVER, the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library's online inventory of manuscripts, <http://www.hmml.org/oliver.html> (retrieved October 2015).

⁹⁹ The codex lacks the first three quires. Edited with a Latin translation in *Acta sanctorum. Julii tomus tertius*, Paris – Rome 1867³, 504-584.

¹⁰⁰ Sinai ar. 409 and 505. The Arabic version was discovered by Gérard Garitte, who published the portion missing in Greek in *Le début de la Vie de S. Étienne le Sabaïte retrouvé en arabe au Sinai*, AnBoll 77 (1959) 332-369. The full text is available in B. PIRONE, *Leontio di Damasco: Vita di Santo Stefano Sabaita* (725-794) (SOC Monographiae 4), Cairo 1991; reedited in J.C. LAMOREAUX, *The Life of Stephen of Mar Sabas* (CSCO.Ar 50-51), Louvain 1999. A fragment from another manuscript, equally from Sinai, is identified in J.C. LAMOREAUX, *The Life of Stephen* 1, cit. x-xi.

¹⁰¹ *Acta sanctorum*, cit. (n. 99), 570-571; J.C. LAMOREAUX, *The Life of Stephen*, cit. (n. 100), 1: 129-130, 2: 116-117 (English translation).

¹⁰² J.C. LAMOREAUX, *Leontius of Damascus*, in *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History* 1, ed. by D. THOMAS – B. ROGGEEMA (History of Christian-Muslim Relations 11), Leiden 2009, 406-410, at 408. The Paris excerpt has been collated against the complete Arabic version of the *vita* in J.C. LAMOREAUX, *The Life of Stephen* 1, cit. (n. 100), xiv.

¹⁰³ Catalogued in OLIVER, <http://www.hmml.org/oliver.html> (retrieved October 2015).

Zosimus translated from Arabic into Georgian the story about the slumbering monks. The translation was made in the Monastery of St. Catherine at Sinai. The Georgian excerpt is longer than the Arabic and Slavonic, comprising §§ 159-165 of the Greek *Life of Stephen the Sabaite* (= Arabic 72.1-73.5)¹⁰⁴. It should be emphasized that, while the Slavonic attributes the apophthegm to «our most venerable Father Stephen of Thebes», in Arabic and Georgian the text has survived under the name of Stephen the Sabaite¹⁰⁵. Thus, it is clear that the attribution of the apophthegm about vigils to Stephen of Thebes is secondary, and that originally the text circulated under the authority of his namesake from the Monastery of Mar Sabas, from whose *vita* it has actually been extracted. In conclusion, there is no argument to include the Slavonic text in the literary corpus of Stephen of Thebes.

2.5. *Gnomai*

إِنْ أَنْتَ مَعَنِّا إِنَّا لِلسَّالِمَةِ مَلَكِيَّا مَغْلُظَاتِ هَمَمْنَةِ فَهَمَمْنَةِ مَهْمَمْنَةِ لِلْمُلْكَمْنَةِ («If you want to enter life and rest with all the saints and write your name in the book of life and have a portion in the resurrection of the pure»)¹⁰⁶.

Arabic	Ethiopic (Ge'əz)
1. Sinai, Arabic 235	1. London, BL Or. 763
2. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Marsh. 465, f. 255r-v (Garṣūnī)	2. Paris, BnF Abbadie 85 3. EMML 7469

In his edition of the Arabic version of the *Sermo asceticus*, Sauget mentioned Sinai, Arabic 235 as one possible witness of this text¹⁰⁷. He based his tentative identification solely on Margaret Dunlop Gibson's catalogue of the Arabic manuscripts in the Monastery of St. Catherine at Sinai, which does not quote the *incipit*¹⁰⁸. Father Khalil Sami has provided later an English translation of the beginning of the text according to the Sinai manuscript, «If you wish to enter into life, and rejoice with all the saints»¹⁰⁹, which demonstrates that Sauget's identification cannot be sustained since the passage in question does not appear in the *Sermo asceticus*.

A hitherto unknown manuscript of the same work is Bodleian Library MS Marsh. 465, f. 255r-v, a Garšūnī codex dated by Robert Payne Smith to the sixteenth century¹¹⁰. The Oxford codex comprises a collection of homilies by Isaac of Antioch and other ascetical writings by various authors.

Samir speculated that this short text has literary connections with § 78 of the Arabic version of the *Sermo asceticus*, which begins somewhat similarly, «My son, if you wish to enter the kingdom of heaven», albeit he agrees that the resemblance is limited to the introductory words. While it is true that the text comprises apodictic material similar to the *Commandments*, the *Diataxis* and to some parts of the *Sermo asceticus*, it stands out as a completely different work. After the *incipit* mentioned above, follow eleven commandments, all of them starting with «Do not be called (so and so)» لا تكون تدعى (so and so). Below are the first and the last in Garşūnī and Arabic transcription:

فلا تؤيد مصلحته، فلا تؤيد مصلحة الله.
فلا تدعوه، مستكرر بل تدعوه، متواضع

Do not be called arrogant, but be called modest.

لَا يَأْتِي مَوْجَةً لِّلْمَجَالِهِ حَلَّ السَّاعَةِ حَوْلَهُمْ لَكُمْ
لَا تَكُونُ تَدْعُوا الْمُخَالِفَ بِلَّا حَفَظْتُمُوهُ صَاحِبَ الْأَلْهَامِ

Do not be called offender, but keeper of the commandments of God.

¹⁰⁴ This was identified in G. GARITTE, *Un extrait géorgien de la Vie d'Étienne le Sabaïte*, Muséon 67 (1954) 71-92.

¹⁰⁵ The Garšūni version in St. Mark's Monastery, MS 167, ascribes the text to St. Sabas (القديس سباستيان).

¹⁰⁶ Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Marsh. 465, f. 255r.

¹⁰⁷ J.-M. SAUGET, *Étienne le Thébain*, cit. (n. 7), 370.

¹⁰⁸ M. DUNLOP GIBSON, *Catalogue of the Arabic MSS. in the Convent of S. Catherine on Mount Sinai* (StSin 3), London-Cambridge 1894, 34; cf. also G. GRAF, GCAL 1, cit. (n. 2), 413.

¹⁰⁹ S.K. SAMIR, *Stephen the Theban*, cit. (n. 17), 2155a-b.

¹¹⁰ R. PAYNE SMITH, *Catalogi codicum manuscriptorum bibliothecae Bodleianae* part 6: *Codices syriacos, carshunicos, mendaeos, complectens*, Oxford 1864, 484 (= no. 150).

The same text exists also in Ge'ez, undoubtedly translated from Arabic¹¹¹. The Ethiopic explicitly mentions Stephen the Theban (አስተያየት: አስተያየት) as the author of the writing. The *incipit* aligns with the Arabic, ለእመ: ለቁድ: ከመ: ታሳ: መስተ: ስጋዬት: መታኋርቃ: የጋለ: ማንበረ: ቅጽሑን: መጽሑፍ: መስተ: መጽሑፍ: ስጋዬት: መታኋርቃ: በተንሃሚ: ቅጽሑን: ቅጽሑን¹¹².

Although we must proceed with caution, I think it is possible to assume that this text is genuine. However, a more careful comparison with the other texts of Stephen of Thebes will hopefully enable nuances to be drawn and this tentative ascription will become more plausible.

Finally, the Garšūnī manuscripts Paris, BnF Syriaque 239, ff. 280v-282r and Cambridge, University Library DD 15.2, ff. 60r-64v¹¹³ give an extract from a certain Anba Stephen, which Hermann Zotenberg identified with Stephen of Thebes¹¹⁴. As the Paris manuscript contains at ff. 137v-139v an extract from the *Sermo asceticus*, the lemma which introduces our text, «also from the sayings of Anba Stephen» (وأيضاً من قول الأنبا استفانوس), gives weight to Zotenberg's hypothesis. If this authorship is maintained, the aforementioned manuscripts could provide either another portion from the *Gnomai*, or a new text by the same author. However, more research is needed before establishing that «Anba Stephen» must be identified with Stephen of Thebes.

2.6. Sermon on penitence

*Incipit. اسمعوا ما اقول لكم ان كل نصراني يترك وصايا الله ويمشى في اعمال الشيطان (Listen what I say to you, every Christian who leaves the commandments of God and walks in the deeds of the devil)*¹¹⁵.

Arabic

1. Paris, BnF Arabe 213, ff. 137r-144r
2. Paris, BnF Arabe 4894, ff. 42r-47r
3. Abu Maqr, Hag. 46
4. Cairo, Franciscan Centre 57, ff. 19v-22r
5. Cairo, Patriarchate 456, ff. 204v-214r
6. Cairo, Patriarchate 544, ff. 33r-53v

This sermon on penitence is available only in Arabic. The text was ascribed to Stephen of Thebes by Georg Graf, albeit he did not supply any argument in this regard¹¹⁶. From the manuscripts that he mentions, none of them attributes explicitly the text to Stephen of Thebes¹¹⁷. For example, the lemma of the sermon in Cairo, Patriarchate 544 reads, مومظة من قول القديس اسطفانوس تبكيت للنفس وتوبية.¹¹⁸

The text is a pastoral work which explains what means to be a good Christian, «a Christian that leaves the commandments of God and walks in the deeds of the devil is not a Christian (...) A Christian that steals, swears and lies is not a Christian. A Christian that envies and hates is not a Christian» (Cairo, Franciscan Centre 57, f. 19v). The style and subject treated have no connection with the texts of Stephen of Thebes, the homily being rather addressed to an audience formed of urban Christians.

¹¹¹ The Ethiopic text was edited with a Latin translation in V. ARRAS, *Geronticon*, cit. (n. 68), 1: 274 (Go'əz text), 2: 186-187 (Latin translation). Arras used two manuscripts to edit this important collection of Ethiopic *apophthegmata*, London, BL Or. 763 and Paris, BnF Abbadie 85. He had knowledge of a third manuscript, EMML 7469, but this is too badly damaged to be used.

¹¹² V. ARRAS, *Geronticon* 1, cit. (n. 58), 274.

¹¹³ W. WRIGHT, *A Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts Preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge* 2, Cambridge 1901, 1002.

¹¹⁴ H. ZOTENBERG, *Catalogues des manuscrits syriaques*, cit. (n. 25), 195b

¹¹⁵ Cairo, Franciscan Centre 57, f. 19v.

¹¹⁶ G. GRAF, *GCAL* 1, cit. (n. 2), 413 and *GCAL* 2, cit. (n. 2), 498.

¹¹⁷ In most of them, the homily is simply ascribed to a certain «Anba Stephen».

¹¹⁸ G. GRAF, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes chrétiens conservés au Caire*, Vatican 1934, 205.

Therefore, nothing recommends the sermon *On Penitence* to be included in the literary corpus of Stephen of Thebes, not even among the *spuria*¹¹⁹.

3. Conclusions

As we had the opportunity to see, five writings are ascribed to Stephen of Thebes in Greek, Coptic, Arabic, Ethiopic, Georgian, and Slavonic. Another text, the sermon on penitence, was attributed by Georg Graf to the same author, although the content and the title of the work in the manuscripts do not support this ascription.

The most widespread text of Stephen was the *Sermo asceticus*, which has survived in no less than five ancient languages, Greek, Coptic, Arabic, Ethiopic and Georgian. However, although the geographical dissemination of the text was wide, the manuscript attestation is rather meager. Until now have been identified the following manuscripts which contain the *Sermo asceticus*: four Greek, four Arabic, two Sahidic, one Gə'əz, and one Georgian. The most copied texts ascribed to Stephen of Thebes were the *Commandments* and the *Diataxis*, which have survived in numerous Greek and Slavonic codices.

Somewhat surprisingly, leaving aside the Garšūnī manuscripts Oxford, MS Marsh. 465 and Paris, BnF Syriaque 293, which contain the *Gnomai* and al-Šafi ibn al-‘Assāl’s epitome of the *Sermo asceticus*, no traces of Stephen of Thebes have been identified until now in Syriac. However, a systematic survey of the Syriac manuscript repositories may be rewarding in this regard.

Concerning the issue of authenticity, the only genuine writings of Stephen of Thebes seem to be the *Sermo asceticus*, the *Commandments* and possibly the *Gnomai*. The *Diataxis* is simply a compilation from the *Asceticon* of Abba Isaiah, while the *On the all-night vigils*, which is attributed to Stephen of Thebes only in Slavonic, but not in Arabic and Georgian, is an extract from the *Life of Stephen the Sabaite* by Leontius of Damascus.

This article has also tried to document the close ties between Stephen of Thebes and other literary sources connected with the semi-anchoritic communities of Scetis, Nitria and Kellia, notably the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, the writings of Evagrius and those of Isaiah of Scetis. Although his name points to Upper Egypt, I hope that the numerous examples which I have quoted hereby constitute enough evidence that Stephen must be placed in the context of the monastic literature of Lower Egypt. This is especially transparent in his numerous advices about the right way the monk should sit in the cell. «While you sit in your cell, be like an experienced pilot that guides his boats»¹²⁰, says he in one place, and «sitting in your cell, do not be like a tomb, but rather like a hall full of gold and guarded night and day»¹²¹. Certainly, Stephen of Thebes deserves more attention and further study than I have been able to offer within the limits of this article.

An important step towards a better understanding of this author would be to edit properly his writings. Therefore, I give here as a first installment the preliminary edition of the three redactions of the Greek *Commandments*, based on seventeen manuscripts ranging from the eleventh to the eighteenth centuries¹²². The edition of each redaction is based on one manuscript, while the apparatus records all different readings of the other witnesses of the same redaction. For the type A redaction I used as base text Paris, BnF Grec 1598, f. 135r-v (A), against whom I collated the text of London, BL Burney 50 volume 2, ff. 125v-126r (B). For the second redaction, I give the text of Athens, National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation (MIET), Historical and Palaeographical Archive 6, f.154r-v (C) and in the apparatus I record the *variae lectiones* of codices D-L, and P-Q. Finally, the edition of the third

¹¹⁹ This has already been remarked in S.K. SAMIR, *Arabic Sources for Early Egyptian Christianity*, in *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity* ed. by B.A. PEARSON – J.E. GOEHRING (Studies in Antiquity and Christianity), Philadelphia, PA 1986, 82-97, at 90 n. 19.

¹²⁰ § 37 (Greek), É. DES PLACES, *Étienne de Thèbes*, cit. (n. 29), 40.

¹²¹ § 38 (Greek), É. DES PLACES, *Étienne de Thèbes*, cit. (n. 29), 40.

¹²² My sincere thanks to Dr. Michael Zheltov (Post-Graduate School of the Moscow Patriarchate), who kindly collated against my edition three manuscripts in Moscow, and to Dr. Alexandros Tsakos (University of Bergen), who provided transcriptions of two manuscripts in Athens. Thanks are also due to Felix Albrecht (Göttingen Academy of Sciences and Humanities) for checking my edition and suggesting some improvements.

redaction is based on Madrid, El Escorial X. IV. 25, ff. 17r-18v (M), collated against the manuscripts N and O. The complete list of the codices of the *Commandments* which I consulted can be found below. In order to avoid a very large apparatus, I have not retained the orthographical variations of the manuscripts, which are too numerous to be recorded. I hope that the present publication will serve for a future critical edition of the text.

A	Paris, BnF Grec 1598, f. 135r-v	1071/1072
B	London, BL Burney 50 volume 2, ff. 125v-126r	1361/1362
C	Athens, Hist. and Palaeogr. Arch. 6, f.154r-v	sixteenth century
D	Athos, Iviron 408, f. 277r-v	fifteenth century
E	Athens, EBE 440, pp. 58-59	unknown date
F	Moscow, Synodal Greek 271, ff. 36r-37r	seventeenth century
G	Athos, Amorgos, <i>sine numero</i> f. 248r-v	eleventh century
H	Moscow, Synodal Greek 416, ff. 303v-304r	1399
I	Moscow, Synodal Greek 409, ff. 31v-32r	thirteenth century
J	Athos, Vatopedi 472, ff. 196v-197r	twelfth century
K	Paris, BnF Supplément grec 1329, ff. 124v-125v	thirteenth century
L	St. Petersburg, NLR Ms Gr. 572, ff. 3r-4r	sixteenth century
M	Madrid, El Escorial X. IV. 25, ff. 17r-18v	fourteenth century
N	Venice, Marc. gr. app. II.69 (coll. 438), ff. 93v-94r	13th-14th centuries
O	Athens, EBE 522, f. 167r	sixteenth century
P	Jerusalem, Holy Sepulcher no. 170, f. 1r	1781
Q	Jerusalem, Holy Sepulcher no. 215, f. 167v-168r	sixteenth century

Redaction A

Paris, BnF Grec 1598, f. 135r-v (MS A)

Ἐντολαὶ τοῦ ἀββᾶ Στεφάνου τοῦ ἀναχωρητοῦ

Πρῶτον, μὴ ἔχειν κοινωνίαν μετὰ γυναικός, ἵνα μὴ κατακαῆς εἰς τὸ πῦρ αὐτῆς,
 μὴ ἔχειν κοινωνίαν μετὰ παιδίου μικροῦ, ἵνα μὴ ἐμπέσῃς εἰς τὴν παγίδα αὐτοῦ.
 μὴ ἔχειν κοινωνίαν μετὰ τῶν κεφαλῶν τοῦ τόπου.
 μὴ ἀγαπήσῃς ἀπέρχεσθαι εἰς τὰς πόλεις, ὅτι καθαρὸς ἔστη, ἐὰν μὴ ἴδης πονηρά.
 5 μὴ πίνε οἶνον εἰς μέθην, ἵνα μὴ ποιήσῃς τὴν καρδίαν σου μαίνεσθαι εἰς τὴν ἡδονήν.
 μὴ φάγῃς δεύτερον τῆς ἡμέρας χωρὶς ἀνάγκης, ἵνα μὴ παχυνθῇ σου τὸ σῶμα, καὶ παχυνθῶσι
 σου τὰ πάθη.
 μὴ κλείσῃς τὴν θύραν σου ἐπὶ ξένῳ ἀδελφῷ,^a ἵνα μὴ ὁ κύριος κλείσῃ τὴν θύραν
 αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ σοὶ.
 10 ἐπισκέπτου τοὺς ἀρρώστους,^b ἵνα ὁ θεὸς ἐπισκέψεται σέ.
 μὴ πολλὰ κοιμηθῆς, ἀλλ᾽ αἴτησαι ἀδιαλείπτως τὴν βοήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα φύγῃς ὥσπερ
 ὅρνεον ἐκ παγίδος.^c
 μὴ πολυλόγει, ἵνα μὴ ἐμπέσῃς εἰς ψεῦδος.^d
 ἐπίμενε εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ, λέγει γάρ τοὺς δοξάζοντάς με δοξάσω.^e
 15 διάτριψον τὸ σῶμά σου ἐν ἀγιασμῷ,^f μὴ ἐν κόποις πραγματίας.
 μὴ κτήσῃς σεαυτὸν ὑπὲρ τὴν χρείαν σου, ἀλλὰ ζῆσον ἐν βίῳ μετρίῳ.
 ἡσύχαζε, καὶ τὰ ὅδια πράττε.
 δῆλη τῇ δυνάμει σου κράτει τῆς γλώττης.
 ἔχει ταπεινοφροσύνην, ἔχει πραότητα εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους.^g γενοῦν νεκρός, ἵνα ζήσῃς.
 20 πᾶσαν θλῖψιν ἔχει πρὸ δόφθαλμῶν σου, ἵνα κληρονομήσῃς τὴν αἰώνιον ζωὴν.^h

^a cf. Heb 13,2 || ^b Sir 7,35 || ^c cf. Ps 124,7 || ^d cf. Prov 10,19 || ^e 1 Kg 2,30 || ^f cf. 1 Thess 4,4 || ^g cf. Tit 3,2 || ^h cf. Mk 10,17 || Titulus Ο πρῶτος λόγος τοῦ ἀββᾶ Στεφάνου Β || 1 πρῶτον ομ. Β || ἔχειν : ἔχει Β || 4-5 μὴ ἀγαπήσῃς usque ad μέθην ομ. Β || 8 ante μὴ κλείσῃς add. καὶ Β || 10 post θεὸς add. ἐν καιρῷ ἀνάγκης Β || 11 αἴτησαι : αἴτησον Β || 16 σεαυτόν : σεαυτῷ Β || 18 γλώττης : γλώττης σου Β || 20 ante πᾶσαν add. ἔχει ἐαυτῷ ἐαυτὸν ὑποκάτω πάντων Β ||

Commandments of Abba Stephen the Anchorite

1. First of all, do not have fellowship with a woman, so that you do not burn in her fire. Do not have fellowship with a little child, so that you do not fall into his snare. Do not have fellowship with the chiefs of the place.
2. Do not be fond of leaving for the towns, because you are pure if you do not see wicked things.
3. Do not drink wine to drunkenness, so that you do not turn to the maddening of pleasure.
4. Do not eat twice a day if it is not necessary, so that your body does not grow fat and thus fatten your passions.
5. Do not shut your door to the foreign brother, so that the Lord does not shut his door to you.
6. Look after the sick, so that the Lord will look after you.
7. Do not sleep much, but ask unceasingly the help of God, so that you flee like a bird from the snare.
8. Do not talk much, so that you do not fall into falsehood.
9. Remain in the house of God, for it is said, «those who honor me, I will honor».
10. Weary your body in holiness, not in exhausting labors,
11. Do not gather for yourself more than you need, but live a moderate life.
12. Be quiet and mind your own business.
13. Master your tongue with your entire strength.
14. Be humble.
15. Show meekness towards all human beings.
16. Be dead so that you may live.
17. Have every affliction in front of your eyes in order to inherit the everlasting life.

Redaction B

Athens, National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation (MIET), Historical and Palaeographical Archive 6, f.154r-v (MS C)

Στεφάνου Θηβαΐτου ἐντολαὶ τοῖς ἀποτασσομένοις

Πρῶτον μέν, μὴ ἔχει κοινωνίαν μετὰ γυναικῶν, ἵνα μὴ κατακαῆς εἰς τὸ πῦρ αὐτῶν,
 μῆτε μετὰ μικροῦ παιδίου, ἵνα μὴ ἐμπέσῃς εἰς τὴν παγίδα αὐτοῦ.
 μὴ ἔχει κοινωνίαν μετὰ ἀρχόντων τοῦ τόπου.
 μὴ ἀγαπήσῃς ἀπέρχεσθαι εἰς τὰς πόλεις, ὅτι καθαρός ἐστιν ὁ ὀφθαλμός, ἐὰν μὴ
 5 ἔδη πονηρά.
 μὴ πίνε οἶνον εἰς μέθην, ἵνα μὴ ποιεῖ τὴν καρδίαν σου μαινομένην εἰς τὴν πορνείαν.
 μὴ φάγης δεύτερον τῆς ἡμέρας χωρὶς ἀνάγκης, ἵνα μὴ παχυνθῇ σου τὸ σῶμα, καὶ παχυνθῶσι
 σου καὶ τὰ πάθη.
 μὴ κλείσῃς τὴν θύραν σου ἐπὶ ξένῳ,^a ἵνα μὴ ὁ κύριος κλείσῃ τὴν θύραν αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ σύ, ὅτι ἐν
 10 ὕψη πετρῶν ἀρρώστους,^c ἵνα ὁ θεὸς ἐπισκέψεται σοῦ.
 μὴ πολλὰ κοιμηθείς, ἀλλ’ αἴτει ἀδιαλείπτως τὴν βοήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα ύσθης ὥσπερ ὅρνεον
 ἐκ παγίδος.^d
 μὴ πολυλόγει, ἵνα μὴ ἐμπέσῃς εἰς ψεῦδος.^e
 15 ἐπίμενε εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ, λέγει γὰρ τοὺς δοξάζοντάς με δοξάσω.^f ταῦτα γὰρ ποιῶν
 σεαυτὸν σώσεις, καὶ τοὺς ἀκούοντας σοῦ.^g
 διάτριψον ἐν ἀγιασμῷ,^h μὴ ἐν κόποις πραγματίας, ἵνα πᾶν ὅ αἰτήσεις, λάβης ταχύ.
 φεῦγε ὡς καθαρὸς ἀπὸ ἀναθέματος.
 μὴ κτήσῃς σεαυτὸν ὑπὲρ τὴν χρείαν σου, ἀλλὰ ζῆσον ἐν βίῳ μετρίῳ, ἵνα ἔχεις δοῦναι τοῖς
 20 χρείαν ἔχουσιν. ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν, ὃς ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων,
 ἀμήν.ⁱ

^a cf. Heb 13,2 || ^b cf. Matt 7,2 || ^c Sir 7,35 || ^d cf. Ps 124,7 || ^e cf. Prov 10,19 || ^f 1 Kg 2,30 || ^g 1 Tim 4,16 || ^h cf. 1 Thess 4,4
 || ⁱ cf. Rom 16,27 ||

Titulus Στεφάνου ... ἀποτασσομένοις DFGHILKL : Στεφάνου ... ἀποταξομένοις Ε : τοῦ αὐτοῦ Ι : Στεφάνου τοῦ Σαβαΐτου ἐντολαὶ τοῖς ἀποτασσομένοις Ρ : Στεφάνου τοῦ Θηβαΐτου ἐντολαὶ τοῖς ἀποτασσομένοις Ζ || 1 γυναικῶν : γυναικός ΖΕ || 6 μὴ πίνε οἶνον εἰς μέθην ομ. EFGPQ || post σου add. εἰς μέθην DF || 7-8 τὸ σῶμα usque ad παχυνθῶσι σου ομ. G || 8 παχυνθῶσι : παχυνθῇ EF || 9 ἐπὶ ξένῳ usque ad τὴν θύραν ομ. I || ξένῳ : ξένων D || 9 σοῦ : σοὶ DEGKPQ || 10 μέτρῳ ομ. D || σοὶ : σοῦ || 11 σοῦ : σοὶ || 14 μὴ πολυλόγει usque ad ψεῦδος ομ. HII || 19 μὴ κτήσῃς usque ad χρείαν σου : μὴ κτήσῃς χρυσὸν ἐν τῇ ζωῇ σου, μὴ δὲ ὑπὲρ τὴν χρείαν σού τι ἐπισωρεύεις I || σεαυτόν : ἑαντῷ D σεαυτῷ EFGHILPQ || ζῆσον : ζῆτησον FI || post μετρίῳ add. ἐργάζου EFGPQ || 20 post δόξα add. καὶ τὸ κράτος I || τῶν αἰώνων ομ. DEFGHILPQ ||

Commandments of Stephen of Thebes for those who have renounced (the world)

1. First of all, do not have any fellowship with women, so that you do not burn in their fire, nor with a little child, so that you do not fall in his snare. Do not have fellowship with the rulers of the place.
2. Do not be fond of leaving for the towns, because pure is the eye if you do not see wicked things.
3. Do not drink wine to drunkenness, so that you do not turn to the maddening of fornication.
4. Do not eat twice a day if it is not necessary, so that your body does not grow fat and fatten your passions.
5. Do not shut your door to the foreign, so that the Lord does not shut his door to you, for with the measure you measure it will be measured back to you.
6. Look after the sick, so that the Lord will look after you.
7. Do not sleep much but ask unceasingly the help of God, so that you may be delivered like a bird from the snare.
8. Do not talk much, so that you do not fall into falsehood.

9. Remain in the house of God, for it is said, «those who honor me, I will honor». «For by doing these, you will save yourself and those that listen to you».

10. Spend time in holiness, not in exhausting labors, so that everything that you ask you will receive right away.

11. Flee as a pure one from the accursed.

12. Do not gather for yourself more than you need, but live a moderate life, so that you have in order to give to those who need.

In Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom is the glory to the ages, Amen.

Redaction C

Madrid, El Escorial X. IV. 25, ff. 17r-18v (MS M)

Τοῦ ἀββᾶ Στεφάνου κεφάλαια ιβ'

- α) Μὴ ἔχε φιλίαν μετὰ γυναικός, ἵνα μὴ τὸ πῦρ αὐτῆς κατακαύσει σε,
- β) εἴτε μετὰ μικροῦ παιδίου, ἵνα μὴ ἐμπέσῃς εἰς τὴν παγίδα αὐτοῦ.
- γ) μὴ ἔχε φιλίαν μετὰ κεφαλῶν τοῦ τόπου, ἀλλ' ἄκουε τῶν λόγων αὐτοῦ, καὶ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ μὴ ποιήσῃς.
- 5 δ) μὴ ἀγαπήσεις ἀπελθεῖν εἰς πόλιν, ὅτι καθαρός ἐστιν ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου, ἐὰν μὴ ἴδῃς πονηρά.
- ε) μὴ πίνε οἶνον εἰς κόρον, ἵνα μὴ ποιήσῃς τὴν καρδίαν σου μαινομένη εἰς ἡδονάς.
- ζ) μὴ φάγεις δίς, ἵνα μὴ παχυνθῇ σου τὸ σῶμα, καὶ ἀστατοῦσί σου οἱ λογισμοὶ ἀρεμβόμενοι.
- η) μὴ κλήσεις τὴν θύραν σου ἐπὶ ξένων,^a ἵνα μὴ ὁ κύριος τὴν θύραν κλήσει ἐπὶ σοί.
- η) ἐπισκέπτου ἀρρωστοῦντας,^b ἵνα ὁ κύριος ἐπισκέψεται σέ.
- 10 θ) μὴ πολλὰ κοιμηθῆς, ἀλλ' αἴτησον περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀδιαλείπτως τὴν βοήθειαν, ἵνα φύγῃ ὥσπερ ὅρνεον ἐκ παγίδος.^c
- ι) ἐπίμενε εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ, λέγει γάρ τοῖς δοξάζοντάς με δοξάσω.^d ταῦτα γάρ ποιῶν, σώσει καὶ αὐτὸν καὶ τοῖς μετὰ σέ.^e
- ια) διάθρεψον τὸ σῶμά σου ἐν ἀγιασμῷ,^f ἵνα ὁ ἐὰν αἴτησει λάβεις ταχὺ καθαρὸς ὣν τῇ 15 ψυχῇ.
- ιβ) μὴ κτήσῃ σεαὐτῷ, ὑπὸ τὴν χρείαν σου, μήτε ἴμάτιον μήτε τι τῶν τῷ σώματι διαφερόντων, ἀλλὰ ζῆσον ἐν βίῳ μετριότητι, ἵνα ἔχεις δοῦναι τῷ χρείαν ἔχοντι, ταῦτα γάρ ἐὰν ποιήσαι ζῆσται ἐν θεῷ καὶ εἰρήνῃ, ἀμήν.

^a cf. Heb 13,2 || ^b Sir 7,35 || ^c cf. Ps 124,7 || ^d 1 Kings 2,30 || ^e cf. 1 Tim 4,16 || ^f cf. 1 Thess 4,4 ||

Titulus Τοῦ ἐν ἀγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν ἀββᾶ Στεφάνου ἐντολαι ιβ' Ν :Ἐντολαὶ τοῦ ἀββᾶ Στεφάνου Ο || 1 ἔχε : κτήσῃ Ν : κτήσεις Ο || μὴ τὸ πῦρ αὐτῆς κατακαύσει σε : ἵνα μὴ κατακαῆς εἰς τὸ πῦρ αὐτῆς ΝΟ || 2 εἴτε : μὴ ἔχε φιλίαν ΝΟ || ἐμπέσῃς post αὐτοῦ transp. Ν || 3-8 μὴ ἔχε φιλίαν usque ad κλήσεις ἐπὶ σοι om. Ο || 5 ἐάν : ἵνα Ν || 6 ἡδονάς : ἡδονή Ν || 7 post δίς add. τῆς ήμέρας Ν || 7 οἱ λογισμοὶ ἀρεμβόμενοι : τὰ πάθη || 8 ξένων : ξένω Ν || τὴν θύραν κλήσει : κλείσις τὴν αὐτοῦ θύραν Ν || post σοι add. ὅτι ἐν φέρε μετρεῖς, ἀντιμετρηθήσεται σοι Ν || 9 post κύριος add. ἀντ' Ν || ἐπισκέψεται σε : ἐπισκέψει εἰς σο Ο || 10 περὶ : παρά ΝΟ || 11 τὴν βοήθειαν om. Ν 12 δοξάσω : ἀντιδοξάσω || 12-13 ταῦτα γάρ usque ad μετά σε om. Ο || σε : σου Ν || 14 ante διάθρεψον add. μὴ θρέψῃ τὸ σῶμά σου, ἵνα μὴ σε πολέσει Ο || λάβεις post ταχύ transp. Ν ταχύ om. Ο || 14-15 καθαρὸς ὣν τῇ ψυχῇ : καὶ καθάρης τὴν ψυχήν σου Ν : ὡς καθαρὸς τῇ ψυχῇ Ο || 16 σεαὐτῷ : ἐαυτῷ Ν || 16-17 μὴ κτήσῃ σεαὐτῷ usque ad τῷ χρείαν ἔχοντι om. Ο : σου usque ad διαφερόντων om. Ν || 17 μετριότητι : μετριώ Ν || τῷ χρείαν ἔχοντι : τοῖς χρείαν ἔχουσι Ν || 17-18 ταῦτα γάρ usque ad καὶ εἰρήνη, ἀμήν : ταῦτα γάρ ποιῶν, σώσεις ἐαυτὸν καὶ τοῖς ὑπὸ σε Ο : γάρ om. Ν || 18 ἐν θεῷ καὶ εἰρήνῃ, ἀμήν : ἐν εἰρήνῃ Ν ||

Twelve chapters of Abba Stephen

1. Do not have friendship with a woman, so that her fire will not burn you,
2. or with a little child, so that you do not fall in his snare.
3. Do not have friendship with the chiefs of the place, but listen to their words and do not act according to his works.
4. Do not be fond to go to the town, for pure is your eye if you do not see the wicked.
5. Do not drink wine to satiety, so that you do not turn your heart maddened of pleasure.

6. Do not eat twice (a day), so that your body does not grow fat, and also the wandering thoughts will never give you rest.
7. Do not shut your door to the strangers, so that the Lord will not shut the door to you.
8. Look after the sick, so that the Lord will look after you.
9. Do not sleep much but ask unceasingly for the help of God, so that you flee like a bird from the snare.
10. Remain in the house of God, for it is said, «those who honor me, I will honor». «For by doing these, you will save yourself and those that are with you».
11. Consume your body in holiness, so that if you ask, you will receive right away if the soul is pure.
12. Do not gather for yourself more than you need, neither a cloak, nor any of those that belong to the body, but live a moderate life so that you have in order to give to the one who is in need. For if you will do these, you will live in God and in peace, Amen.

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Abstract

Although the writings of Stephen of Thebes were widely disseminated, being known in Greek, Coptic, Arabic, Ethiopic, Georgian and Slavonic, this ascetic author is largely neglected today by historians of monastic literature. The present article offers an account of the five texts that have been ascribed to Stephen in ancient manuscripts and modern research. The problem of authorship and other philological issues are discussed for each text individually. Examination of the authentic writings of Stephen of Thebes suggests that there are good arguments to contextualize him in the semi-anchoritic milieus of Lower Egypt. The article also features preliminary editions of the three Greek redactions of Stephen of Thebes' ascetic *Commandments*.