

COPTIC FRAGMENTS FROM CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA'S *SCHOLIA ON THE INCARNATION OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN* AUCTIONED BY SOTHEBY'S

In July 2009, during a research visit at the *Papyrussammlung* of the National Library in Vienna, Cornelia Römer drew my attention to ten Coptic parchment fragments that were on offer by Sotheby's at that time. As Dr. Römer was the director of the papyrus museum, she was willing to acquire the fragments for the Viennese collection, but eventually I learned that they had been purchased for 28,750 GBP by another collector. Their present location is unknown, and the identity of the buyer was not revealed by Sotheby's, nor has any institution yet announced their possession. In the meanwhile, I realized that at least one of the fragments belongs to the Coptic translation of the *Scholia on the Incarnation of the Only Begotten* by Cyril of Alexandria. Due to the value of this Patristic work, a discussion about the new manuscript testimony is perhaps not completely useless.

Here is the report on the fragments in question, posted on Sotheby's website:

Sale: L09740

10 fragments of varying sizes: (1) a near complete leaf, 335mm. by 261mm.; (2) (3) & (7) substantial fragments of leaves approximately 240mm. wide, (4) & (6) large sections of single columns; the remainder small pieces approximately 60mm. across; written space of (1) 255mm. by 165mm, double column, with 31 lines in black ink, capitals within the text touched in red, those beginning significant sections with clubs at the end of their terminals, dots within their bodies and outlined in red, vellum dry and brittle in places, many tears to outer edges of leaves, but in good and presentable condition.

Sotheby's claimed that all the fragments auctioned came from the same ancient manuscript. However, the only picture available on its website shows the verso of the best-preserved leaf, which I will conveniently call hereafter "Sotheby's 1."¹ Since I was not able to see any other part of the text except that photo, my comments will be restricted to what is visible therein, albeit all the items might be codicologically related.

While I was checking the photo of the fragment with Dr. Römer, I discovered features which suggest that it may come from one of the White Monastery codices copied in the scriptorium of Touton, in the Fayyum. The manuscripts produced in this scriptorium bear distinctive paleographical traits which facilitate their identification.² As many colophons testify, scribes from Touton copied during the 10th century numerous codices for the White Monastery, situated in Upper Egypt, near ancient Panopolis (modern Akhmim). This monastery possessed at the turn of the first millennium a large library of parchment books. Unfortunately, its codices survived only in torn pieces which repose today in numerous

¹ The picture is available on Sotheby's website at http://www.sothebys.com/app/live/lot/LotDetail.jsp?lot_id=159542226.

² One of the most peculiar features of the Toutonian manuscripts is the so-called "budded-diple," usually inserted in the outer margins of the pages. On the manuscripts copied in the Touton scriptorium, see L. Depuydt, *Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library* vol. 1 (Corpus of Illuminated Manuscripts 4; Louvain: Peeters, 1993) cx, cxii–cxvi; and most recently C. Nakano, "Indices d'une chronologie relative des manuscrits coptes copiés à Toutôn (Fayoum)," *Journal of Coptic Studies* 8 (2006) 147–159.

collections across the world.³ Noteworthy about the Sotheby's fragments is that they provide some previously unknown Coptic text.

A Sotheby's catalogue note describes the content of the folios in the following way:

These leaves contain parts of a number of Christian sermons which mention Jesus, Moses, Aaron, the apostles, and the Trinity; the largest of them contains a discussion of the relationship of man to the figures of the Old Testament, and ultimately to God.

In fact, the little amount of text which can be obtained from the picture that we have at hand, already suggests a possible author. The fragment calls Christ Logos, Emmanuel and Only Begotten and discusses the relationship between his divinity and humanity. This issue represented the main controversy during the Nestorian crisis and was often debated by Cyril of Alexandria. Indeed, "Sotheby's 1" can be safely identified as a portion from Cyril's *Scholia on the Incarnation of the Only Begotten* (CPG 5225),⁴ a dogmatic work central to the Christological debates of the 4th century. Unfortunately, the *scholia* survived only partly in Greek, but their text is recoverable from the translations made in Latin and various languages of the Christian Orient.⁵

More precisely, the Coptic text parallels Schwartz, *ACO*, I.5.1, p. 214, l. 10-20. As the Greek original is lost at this point, I will give on two columns the transcription of the verso of "Sotheby's 1," lines 4-26 and the Latin text available in Schwartz's edition.

"Sotheby's 1"	Schwartz, <i>ACO</i> , I.5.1, p. 214, l. 11-15
<p> ΑΝΑΠΙΗΛ ΚΡΜΡΜ ΕΜΩΥΧΗC ΜΝΑΑΡΩΝ ΑΥΩ ΑΤΑΝΑΦΟΡΑ ΜΠΖΩΒ ΩΠ ΕΠΝΟΥΤΕ· ΚΑΙΤΟΙ ΕΥΡΩΜΕ ΠΕ ΜΩΥΧΗC ΜΝΑΑΡΩΝ ΝΤΕΙΖΕ ΚΑΤΑ ΠΕΙCΜΟΤ ΔΕ ΟΝ ΝΟΥΩΤ· ΕΚΝΑΕΙΜΕ ΕΤΒΕ ΠΚΕCΕΕΠΕ ΝΤΑΝΕΡΠΕΥΜΕΕΥΕ ΤΕΝΟΥ· ΖΝΠΕΤΟΥΑΑΒ ΜΕΝ ΓΑΡ ΝΕ· ΚΑΤΑ ΘΕ ΝΤΑΙ[Χ]ΟΟC· ΑΥΩ ΜΠΩΑ ΝΤΕΟΟΥ ΝΑΥ· ΠΛΗΝ ΖΝΡΩΜΕ ΝΕ ΝΤΝΖΕ· </p>	<p> <i>murmurabat aduersus Moysen et Aaron populus Israhel, et res quidem hæc habebat relationem in deum, erant tamen homo Moyses <sed> et Aaron similes nostri. eodem pacto etiam in aliis intelleges quorum nuper fecimus mentionem. sed errant quidem, ut ante dixi, sancti et admirabiles homines, homines tamen similes nostri;</i> </p>

³ On the library of the White Monastery, see T. Orlandi, "The Library of the Monastery of St. Shenute at Atripe," in A. Egberts, B. P. Muhs & J. van der Vliet (eds.), *Perspectives on Panopolis: An Egyptian Town from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest* (Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava, 31; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002) 211-231; S. Emmel & C. Römer, "The Library of the White Monastery in Upper Egypt," in H. Froschauer and C. Römer (eds.), *Spätantike Bibliotheken: Leben und Lesen in den frühen Klöstern Ägyptens* (Nilus: Studien zur Kultur Ägyptens und des Vorderen Orients 14; Vienna: Phoibos, 2008) 5-14.

⁴ The Greek fragments of the *Scholia on the Incarnation* are available in PG 75, coll. 1369-1412; the complete ancient translation in Latin is printed in PL 48, coll. 1004-1040. The standard edition is that of E. Schwartz, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* vol. I.5.1 (Berlin – Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1924), which gives both the Greek fragments and the Latin text. There is a relatively recent translation in English in J. A. McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy. Its History, Theology, and Texts* (Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae*, 23; Leiden – New York – Köln: E. J. Brill, 1994) 294-335.

⁵ Beside the Greek fragments, the text is known in Latin, Syriac, Coptic, Arabic, Georgian and Armenian. For supplementary details, cf. the references in M. Geerard, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum* vol. 3: *A Cyrillo Alexandrino ad Iohannem Damascenus* (Corpus Christianorum; Turnhout: Brepols, 1979) *sub numero*; M. Geerard & J. Noret, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum: Supplementum* (Corpus Christianorum; Turnhout: Brepols, 1998) *sub numero*.

“Sotheby’s 1” originally belonged to an already-known codex, which is divided among several collections. As I hope that the fragments will reappear soon and they will be available for scholarly research, I should like to mention here further details concerning this dismembered White Monastery manuscript. Other fragments from the same codex have been indentified some time ago by Enzo Lucchesi.⁶ The seven fragments spotted by Mr. Lucchesi are completed by a supplementary folio kept in the National Library in Vienna (i.e. K 9580), and perhaps by the entire lot auctioned at Sotheby’s in July 2009.

Adding the newly recovered fragments, we can attempt to revisit the structure of the codex which contained Cyril’s *scholia*:

Berlin, Staatsbibliothek 1608, f. 4 = p. [15]-[16] (end of the first quire)
 Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale 131⁶, f. 2 = p. [31]-[32] (end of the second quire)
 Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale 131³, f. 65 = p. 61-62
 Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale 131⁵, f. 74 = p. [79]-[80]
 Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek K 9580 = p. 81-82
 Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale 131⁵, f. 72 = p. 85-86
 Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale 131⁸, f. 146 = p. 89-90
 Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale 131⁵, f. 73 = p. 91-92
 “Sotheby’s 1” = p. [?]-[?]

Although no page numbers have survived on “Sotheby’s 1,” its position in the original codex is not difficult to establish since the verso corresponds to the final part of the *Scholia on the Incarnation*. If the other nine fragments belong indeed to the same manuscript, then they would fall somewhere within the numerous *lacunae* of the codex. Let us hope that it will be only a short time until we will find out more about this lot of fragments and that the owner, whether an institution or a private person, will understand that no small amount of work remains to be done in order to study them properly.

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⁶ E. Lucchesi, *Répertoire des manuscrits coptes (sahidiques) publiés de la Bibliothèque nationale de Paris* (Cahiers d’Orientalisme, 1; Patrick Cramer: Geneva, 1981) 76, 80, 81, 84; E. Lucchesi & P. Devos, “Un corpus basilien en copte. Appendix IV: Les Scholia de Incarnatione Unigeniti de S. Cyrille d’Alexandrie traduits en copte,” *Analecta Bollandiana* 99 (1981) 75-94, at 93-94; cf. also E. Lucchesi, “Le dialogue *Quod unus sit Christus* de Cyrille d’Alexandrie en copte,” *Orientalia* n.s. 73 (2004) 289-301, at 290.