

## FURTHER LEAVES FROM A WHITE MONASTERY CODEX CONTAINING TEXTS ATTRIBUTED TO ATHANASIUS OF ALEXANDRIA

In a recent issue of the journal *Orientalia*, Enzo Lucchesi commented upon a Sahidic parchment leaf kept in Strasbourg University Library.<sup>1</sup> The folio bears the inventory number “Copte 248” and it was formerly identified by Françoise Morard as part of the Coptic homily *De homicidis*, *In Michaellem*, attributed to Athanasius of Alexandria (CPG 2191; *clavis coptica* 0048).<sup>2</sup> This sermon is readily available in the Italian translation made by Tito Orlandi after one of the Hamuli manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York (M 602, ff. 98<sup>v</sup>-110<sup>v</sup>).<sup>3</sup> Besides, we have knowledge of several fragments that have survived from a White Monastery manuscript (codex MONB.FQ),<sup>4</sup> to which the Strasbourg folio identified by Morard also belonged.

As the homily recounts, among other things, the way in which Pachomius deconspired a murderous deacon through his visionary abilities, Louis Théophile Lefort included the episode in question in his edition of the Coptic *vitae* of the founder of coenobitism.<sup>5</sup> It was precisely in this context that Lefort tried, for the first time, a tentative inventory of the White Monastery codex which contained the sermon *De homicidis*.<sup>6</sup> The *dossier* was further enriched by Françoise Morard with two still unpublished leaves, Strasbourg Copte 248 and Paris BnF Copte 161<sup>6</sup>, f. 38. Finally, in his recent article, Lucchesi included to the same codex one more fragment, held in the Coptic Museum in Cairo (inv. no. 9286). This fragment was edited a long time ago without a proper identification by Henri Munier.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> E. Lucchesi, “Identification de Strasbourg Copte 248,” *Orientalia* 78 (2009) 92-95.

<sup>2</sup> F. Morard, “Les recueils coptes d’Actes apocryphes des apôtres. Un exemple: le codex R,” *Augustinianum* 23 (1983) 73-82.

<sup>3</sup> T. Orlandi, *Omelie copte* (Corona Patrum, 7; Torino: Società editrice internazionale, 1981) 59-70. The codex in question belonged to the Monastery of the Archangel Michael in the Fayyum. Description in L. Depuydt, *Catalogue of Coptic Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library* vol. 1 (Corpus of Illuminated Manuscripts, 4. Oriental Series, 1; Leuven: Peeters, 1993) 224-230 (= no. 116).

<sup>4</sup> For the White Monastery codices, I employ the sigla system of the *Corpus dei manoscritti copti letterari* project (= CMCL, director: Tito Orlandi). According to CMCL’s classification, each White Monastery codex is designated by two letters of the Latin alphabet, which are preceded by MONB (= “Monastero Bianco”).

<sup>5</sup> Edited in L. Th. Lefort, *S. Pachomii vitae Sahidice scriptae* 2 vols. (CSCO, 99-100. *Scriptores coptici*, 9-10; Paris: Typographeo Reipublicae, 1933) 1: 347-350 (= no. 19; S<sup>16</sup>); French translation in Idem, *Les vies coptes de S. Pachôme et de ses premiers successeurs* (Bibliothèque du Muséon, 16; Louvain: Institut Orientaliste, 1943) 382-385.

<sup>6</sup> Lefort identified the remnants of three leaves, out of which two are broken but are recoverable from separate pieces: Paris BnF 129<sup>12</sup>, ff. 72 + 70, Paris BnF 129<sup>12</sup>, f. 71 + 133<sup>2</sup>, f. 57, and Naples I.B. 09, f. 25. All the Parisian fragments except BnF 133<sup>2</sup>, f. 57 were already published by E. Amélineau, *Monuments pour servir à l’histoire de l’Égypte chrétienne aux IV<sup>e</sup> et V<sup>e</sup> siècles* vol. 2 (MMAF 4/2; Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1895) 609-611. For the Naples fragment see G. Zoega, *Catalogus codicum Copticorum manu scriptorum qui in Museo Borgiano Velitris adservantur* (Rome: Typis sacrae congregationis de Propaganda Fide, 1810) 553 (= no. 229) and now P. Buzi, *Catalogo dei manoscritti copti borgiani conservati presso la Biblioteca Nazionale “Vittorio Emanuele III” di Napoli* (Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche. Memorie, ser. 9, vol. 25/1; Rome: Scienze e lettere, 2009) 218.

<sup>7</sup> H. Munier, *Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire. N<sup>os</sup> 9201-9304: Manuscrits coptes* (Cairo: Imprimerie de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 1916) 150-152.

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

The two newly identified Parisian fragments of the codex MONB.FQ are BnF Copte 131<sup>6</sup>, f. 28 and BnF Copte 131<sup>7</sup>, f. 32. The page numbers 7-8 and 9-10 are still visible on the parchment, showing that the fragments which are bound today in separate volumes were originally consecutive leaves. Although both of them were tentatively attributed by Ariel Shisha-Halevy to the Coptic author Shenoute of Atripe,<sup>8</sup> they parallel in fact ff. 101<sup>r</sup>, line 8-102<sup>v</sup>, line 6 in Pierpont Morgan M 602, the other copy of ps.-Athanasius' sermon *De homicidis*.<sup>9</sup> Compared to the text of the Morgan codex, the White Monastery manuscript offers a shorter and slightly different recension, but over all there is no doubt that they represent two witnesses of the same text.

Until now, the last fragment of MONB.FQ was considered to be a leaf in the National Library in Paris identified by Morard (*scil.* BnF Copte 161<sup>6</sup>, f. 38). The original pagination of this fragment is lost, but Enzo Lucchesi rightly pointed out that, if we compare the text to the version preserved in the Pierpont Morgan M 602, we must place it towards the end of Ps.-Athanasius' sermon, as pages [41]-[42] of the codex.<sup>10</sup> Now, I should like to remark that BnF Copte 161<sup>6</sup>, f. 38 was actually followed, at a distance of only one folio, by a previously unnoticed fragment in the British Library. This is BL Or. 6807, f. 6 and, although the parchment is a bit damaged, the pagination 4[5]-[4]6 still can be recovered on it.<sup>11</sup>

The new London folio is of special interest because it carries some important codicological details. Thus, the recto contains the concluding lines of the pseudo-Athanasian homily *De homicidis* and a subscription of the copyist, who signed himself as "Aurelius Flavius Philotheus."<sup>12</sup> The verso of the fragment contains the title of the following work, which reads: ΟΥΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ ΝΤΕΑΠΑ ΑΘΑΝΑCΙΟC ΠΑΡΧΙΕΠΙCΚΟΠΟC ΝΡΑΚΟΤΕ ΕΑΥΤΗΝΝΟΟΥC ΨΑΑΠΑ ΖΩΡCΙΗCΙΟC [M]ΝΑΠΑ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟC ΝΤΕΡΕΥCΩΤΜ ΧΕ Α[Α]ΠΑ ΠΑΖΩΜΟ· ΠΙΩΤ [N]ΤΕΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ ΜΤΟΝ ΜΜΟϢ· ΖΝΟΥΕΙΡΗΝΗ ΝΤΕΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΖΑΜΗΝ.

In this way, it becomes apparent that *De homicidis* was followed in codex MONB.FQ by the epistle of Athanasius to Horsiesius and Theodorus concerning the death of Pachomius (CPG 2190; *clavis coptica* 0453).

It is interesting to note that, although Lefort was aware of the London fragment and published the surviving portion of Athanasius' letter immediately before the fragments of *De homicidis*, he recorded it as belonging to a separate codex and even dated the handwriting one

<sup>8</sup> A. Shisha-Halevy, *Coptic Grammatical Categories: Structural Studies in the Syntax of Shenoutean Sahidic* (Analecta Orientalia, 53; Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1986) 219; S. Emmel is more cautious and counts them among the Shenoutean uncertain fragments, see his *Shenoute's Literary Corpus* vol. 2 (CSCO, 600. Subsidia, 112; Louvain: Peeters, 2004) 904-905.

<sup>9</sup> H. Hyvernat, *Bybliothecae Pierpont Morgan codices coptici photographice expressi* vol. 25 (Rome, 1922) plates 201-204. Italian translation of the corresponding Sahidic text in Orlandi, *Omeliie copte*, 60-62

<sup>10</sup> Lucchesi, "Identification," 95.

<sup>11</sup> B. Layton, *Catalogue of Coptic Literary Manuscripts in the British Library Acquired Since the Year 1906* (London: British Library, 1987) 179-180 (= no. 153).

<sup>12</sup> A. van Lantschoot, *Recueil des colophons des manuscrits chrétiens d'Égypte*. vol. 1: *Les colophons coptes des manuscrits sahidiques* (Bibliothèque du Muséon, 1; Louvain: J.-B. Istas, 1929) no. LXc.

century earlier.<sup>13</sup> This shows once more how relative is the attempt to date the Coptic manuscripts on purely formal grounds.

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

**Ps.-Athanasius of Alexandria, *De homicidis, In Michaellem* (CPG 2191; *clavis coptica* 0048)**

*3 leaves missing*

pages 7-8 = Paris 131<sup>6</sup>, f. 28

pages 9-10 = Paris 131<sup>7</sup>, f. 32

*1 leaf missing*

pages 13-14 = Paris 129<sup>12</sup>, ff. 72 + 70

pages 15-16 = Paris 129<sup>12</sup>, f. 71 + 133<sup>2</sup>, f. 57

*5 leaves missing*

pages 27-28 = Naples I.B. 09, f. 25

*3 leaves missing*

pages 35-36 = Cairo 9286

*1 leaf missing*

pages 39-40 = Strasbourg 248

pages [41]-[42] = Paris 161<sup>6</sup>, f. 38

*1 leaf missing*

page 4[5] = London BL Or. 6807, f. 6<sup>r</sup>

**Athanasius of Alexandria, *Letter to Horsiesius and Theodorus* (CPG 2190; *clavis coptica* 0453)**

page [4]6 = London BL Or. 6807, f. 6<sup>v</sup>

*missing leaves*

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

ALIN SUCIU

---

<sup>13</sup> Edited by Lefort, *S. Pachomii vitae Sahidice scriptae*, 1: 346 (= no. 18; S<sup>18</sup>); translated in Idem, *Les vies coptes*, 380. In *S. Pachomii vitae Sahidice scriptae*, 1: x, Lefort described the fragments as coming from separate manuscripts, S<sup>18</sup> and S<sup>16</sup>, and dated the first of them in the 10<sup>th</sup> century and the second in the 11<sup>th</sup>, without realizing that he ascribed the same hand to different centuries.