

Martyrs and Archangels

Edited by
MATTHIAS MÜLLER
and SAMI ULJAS

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116

Mohr Siebeck

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116



Martyrs and Archangels

Coptic Literary Texts
from the Pierpont Morgan Library

Edited by

Matthias Müller
and Sami Uljas

Mohr Siebeck

Matthias Müller, born 1971; 2003 graduated from Göttingen; since 2004 researcher at the Department Altertumswissenschaften at the University of Basel.

Sami Uljas, born 1974; 2005 PhD in Egyptology from the University of Liverpool; currently Senior Lecturer in Egyptology at the University of Uppsala, Sweden.

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&
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Preface

The volume at hand contains a publication of the following three hitherto unedited Coptic literary works preserved on manuscripts currently in the collections of the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York:

- I. *The Martyrdom of St Phoibamon of Prebt*,
Pierpont Morgan Codex M582 ff.1R–20V
- II. *The Martyrdom of SS Theodore the Anatolian, Leontius the Arab, and Panigerus the Persian*,
Pierpont Morgan Codex M583, ff. 59R–75R
- III. Archelaos of Neapolis: *On Archangel Gabriel*,
Pierpont Morgan Codex M583, ff. 1R–16R

All three texts derive from the so-called Hamuli find, which arguably represents the most important single discovery of Coptic literary manuscripts ever made. The story behind the find and its contents has been often told,¹ and it suffices here to give merely the briefest of summaries. In the spring of 1910, a group of Egyptian farmers chanced upon a cache of Coptic manuscripts reportedly buried in a stone container close to the ruins of the Monastery of St Michael near the modern village of al-Hamuli in the western Fayyum area. The founders, quick to realise the value of their discovery, divided the manuscripts among themselves and subsequently sold them to several dealers in Cairo. Fortunately, the find was brought to the attention of Mssrs Émile Chassinat and Henri Hyvernat, both eminent coptologists, who, impervious to the difficulties involved, managed to re-unite the material. Following various arrangements, the codices were soon thereafter offered for sale to John Pierpont Morgan (1837–1913), the famed American financier, philanthropist, and collector of antiquities. The deal was approved of, and in December 1911 Mr Morgan's agent secured the purchase in Paris of the entire find consisting of over eighty items, among them the codices that were later to be assigned

¹ See Hyvernat, in *JBL* 31; Depuydt, *Cat.*, lviii–lxix.

the sigla M582, M583, and M607. The manuscripts were to travel widely between Paris, London, Rome, and New York, before they finally reached their current home at the Pierpont Morgan Library by 1929 after undergoing restoration work in The Vatican.

The editions in this volume aim at presenting as thorough an account of the texts as possible.² They are based on very high-quality images of the original manuscript leaves taken in 2012. During their stay at Rome in the 1910s and 1920s, the Hamuli codices were photographed, and under the direction of Henri Hyvernat, twelve sets of facsimiles consisting of 56 plate volumes and one index volume were prepared and donated to different institutions in Europe and Cairo.³ These volumes, now also freely accessible online,⁴ and the images therein continue to form the most important recourse for researchers and editors of the Hamuli material. However, when the work on the present edition was initiated in early 2012, it soon transpired that Hyvernat's old images were, in spite of their often excellent quality, not always sufficiently clear in the case of M582 and M583. Consequently, the present editors contacted Pierpont Morgan Library, and in connection with acquiring the permission to edit these and a number of other Coptic texts in the collection, asked the library authorities to prepare a new set of images for the purpose. These provided a solid and accurate basis for carrying out the work without actually having direct access to the original manuscripts.

Each text here is treated in its own, self-standing part of the book that consist of an introductory chapter followed by a transcript of the Coptic text, a translation thereof, a set of indices, and a possible appendix. The introductory section discusses the textual tradition and transmission of the work in question, its historical and geographical aspects, and main protagonist(s). This is followed by an outline of the narrative or contents of the text and a technical description of the manuscript edited, including its grammatical and orthographic characteristics.

The transcripts of the Coptic texts are presented in a diplomatic edition corresponding as closely as possible to the original. Although unusu-

² For additional information on the edition work described here, see Uljas, in *Coptic Society, Literature & Religion* II.

³ See Hyvernat, *Codices* in general and vol. 41, pls. 1–32 (text III) 117–149 (text II), and vol. 46, pls. 3–42 (text I) for the three works edited here in particular.

⁴ <https://archive.org/details/PhantooouLibrary> (accessed January 2018).

al formatting of words and lines, as well as errors, omissions, and other peculiarities are always indicated and explained in notes accompanying the transcript, we have deliberately avoided all attempts to ‘formalise’ or otherwise tamper with the text or its layout. This is because we believe that an edition should straddle the boundary between presentation and facsimile. Short of providing actual images, an edition should still remain faithful to the original form whenever possible. For ease of referring, we have divided the Coptic text into consecutively numbered paragraphs (indicated in the margins as §§) that correspond to similar divisions observable in the original, in conscious opposition to the common practise of freely subdividing texts into discrete units.⁵

The translation of the Coptic text is accompanied with a full philological and linguistic commentary.⁶ The running text is divided into distinct chapters, paragraph numbers corresponding to those in the Coptic text are included, and the progression of pages and changes between columns of text are clearly indicated with superscript sigla and asterisks (*) respectively.

Each chapter closes with individual indices for the text. These include a list of personal names and toponyms, of occurrences of foreign words, a complete Coptic lexical index, a grammatical index of constructions attested in the text, and finally a list of citations and allusions to Biblical and other texts. Parts I and III also include additional appendices at the end for editions of fragmentary manuscripts from elsewhere that contain sections and/or a variant version of the Pierpont Morgan text. At the end of the volume can be found a joint bibliography of the texts edited.

The present volume is intended as a first part in a series of similar publications of Coptic literary works that mostly have not been previously edited, but also of texts that either have been published in a manner that renders re-edition desirable or that have been edited but whose edi-

⁵ See Müller, in *LingAeg* 19 (2011), 338–39 for some reasons for this.

⁶ Here, however, we have partly followed our individual preferences in emphasising various issues. For example, in Parts II & III by Müller, for Biblical references in the original text, the corresponding text from the (Coptic) Scriptures is given in full in the footnotes. This is intended to cater for Biblical scholars among the readership. In Part I by Uljas, similar occurrences are merely noted by giving the reference to the passage as it occurs in the Scriptures. However, in Part I coincidences of wordings, themes, and topoi in other martyrological works are more fully indicated. This is hoped to be of use to readers interested in philological comparisons and interconnections between such texts.

tions remain (probably permanently) inaccessible to a wider audience. The study of these latter types of material has progressed alongside work on the texts included here, which has taken rather longer than anticipated due to other tasks and commitments. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the appearance of subsequent volumes will not be unduly delayed.

The authors would like to thank the Pierpont Morgan Library for the permission to publish the texts presented and for the images of the manuscripts without which our work could scarcely have been accomplished. We also wish to tender our thanks to the *Basler freiwillige akademische Gesellschaft* for their financial support in covering the costs of the images. Additional help was provided by Prof. Susanne Bickel, whom we would similarly wish to thank along with the Institute of Egyptology of the University of Basel. Our deepest gratitude for their help and assistance is also due to the following friends and colleagues: James P. Allen (Brown University), Christian Askeland (Indiana Wesleyan University), Heike Behlmer (Göttingen), Marie Besso (Basel), Anne Boud'hors (Paris), Chip Coakley (Cambridge), Jennifer Cromwell (Copenhagen), Claudia Gamma (Basel), Julien Delhez (Göttingen), Gunnel Ekroth (Uppsala), Victoria Fendel (Basel), Eitan Grossman (Jerusalem), Andrea Hászanos (Budapest & Berlin), Sabine Hübner (Basel), Anthony Kaldellis (Ohio State University), Ingela Nilsson (Uppsala), Luigi Prada (Oxford), Clémentine Reymond (Basel), Gesa Schenke (Oxford), Alin Suciu (Hamburg & Göttingen), Sofia Torallas Tovar (Chicago), and Martin Wallraff (Basel & Munich) as well as the members of the Coptic reading group at the University of Zürich (Robert Barnea, Peter Günther, Kurt Locher, Nicola Schmid, Renate Siegmann, and Toshiko Verhave-Yoshida). Eleonora Kael (Basel) shouldered the task of proofreading the whole manuscript before submission; any remaining errors are of course ours. Last but not least, it is hoped that the dedication of this volume to two friends and scholars with an interest in Coptic will repay some of the gratitude owed to them.

MATTHIAS MÜLLER
Basel

SAMI ULJAS
Uppsala

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-------|
| Preface..... | vii |
| List of Abbreviations..... | xv |
| List of Figures | xvi |
| Part I: <i>The Martyrdom of St Phoibamon of Preht</i> edited by Sami Uljas..... | 1 |
| Introduction..... | 3 |
| <i>Transmission of the Text</i> | 3 |
| <i>Historical and Geographic Aspects of the Passio</i> | 7 |
| <i>The Main Protagonists</i> | 10 |
| <i>Outline of the Narrative</i> | 15 |
| <i>The Passio as a Work of Literature</i> | 22 |
| <i>Technical Features of the Manuscript</i> | 24 |
| <i>Grammar & Graphemic Features</i> | 30 |
| <i>Treatment of Words of Foreign Origin</i> | 33 |
| The Coptic Text..... | 37 |
| Translation | 79 |
| Indices | 121 |
| <i>List of Biblical and Other Textual References</i> | 121 |
| <i>Names (personal, month names & toponyms)</i> | 125 |
| <i>Lexical Index</i> | 127 |
| Loan words | 127 |
| Coptic words | 132 |
| <i>Grammatical Index</i> | 148 |
| Verbal Predication Patterns..... | 148 |
| Bipartite Patterns | 148 |
| Tripartite Patterns..... | 150 |
| Further Patterns | 151 |
| Clause Conjugations | 152 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Non-Verbal Sentence Patterns..... | 153 |
| Appendix: British Library Or. 7561 ff. 67–69 & 116..... | 155 |
| The Coptic Text | 157 |
| Translation | 162 |
| Index of British Library Or. 7561 ff 67 69 & 116..... | 165 |
| <i>The Bible</i> | 165 |
| <i>Personal Names</i> | 165 |
| <i>Loan Words</i> | 165 |
| <i>Coptic Words</i> | 166 |
| <i>Grammatical Index</i> | 168 |
| Part II: <i>The Martyrdom of SS Theodore the Anatolian,</i> <i>Leontius the Arab & Panigerus the Persian</i> edited by Matthias Müller | 171 |
| Introduction | 173 |
| <i>Transmission of the Text</i> | 174 |
| <i>The Good, the Bad, and Then Some. The Protagonists</i> | 177 |
| <i>Outline of the Narrative</i> | 180 |
| <i>Technical Features of the Text</i> | 188 |
| <i>Grammar & Graphemic Features</i> | 196 |
| <i>Treatment of Words of Foreign Origin</i> | 203 |
| Graphemics & Phonology | 203 |
| Morphology | 210 |
| Lexicon..... | 211 |
| The Coptic Text..... | 213 |
| Translation..... | 248 |
| Indices | 279 |
| <i>Biblical and Other Textual References</i> | 279 |
| <i>Names (personal, ethnic & toponyms)</i> | 281 |
| <i>Lexical Index</i> | 283 |
| Loan words..... | 283 |
| Coptic words | 288 |
| <i>Grammatical Index</i> | 298 |
| Verbal Predication Patterns..... | 298 |
| Bipartite Patterns | 298 |

| | |
|---|---------|
| Tripartite Patterns | 299 |
| Further Patterns | 300 |
| Clause Conjugations | 301 |
| Non-Verbal Sentence Patterns | 302 |
| Part III: <i>Archelaos of Neapolis, In Gabrielem</i> edited by Matthias Müller | 303 |
| Introduction | 305 |
| <i>The Protagonists</i> | 307 |
| <i>Outline of the Narrative</i> | 308 |
| <i>Technical Features of the Text</i> | 314 |
| <i>Grammar & Graphemic Features</i> | 321 |
| <i>Treatment of Words of Foreign Origin</i> | 325 |
| Graphemics & Phonology | 325 |
| Morphology | 329 |
| Lexicon | 330 |
| The Coptic Text | 331 |
| Translation | 365 |
| Indices | 393 |
| <i>List of Biblical and Other Textual References</i> | 393 |
| <i>Names (personal, ethnic & toponyms)</i> | 395 |
| <i>Lexical Index</i> | 396 |
| Loan words | 396 |
| Coptic words | 400 |
| <i>Grammatical Index</i> | 412 |
| Verbal Predication Patterns | 413 |
| Bipartite Patterns | 413 |
| Tripartite Patterns | 414 |
| Further Patterns | 415 |
| Clause Conjugations | 416 |
| Non-Verbal Sentence Patterns | 417 |
| Appendix: Additional Folia from a White Monastery Codex | 419 |
| The Coptic Text | 427 |
| Translation | 437 |
| Indices | 447 |

| | |
|--|---------|
| <i>List of Biblical and Other Textual References</i> | 447 |
| <i>Names (Personal, ethnic & toponyms)</i> | 448 |
| <i>Lexical Index</i> | 448 |
| Loan Words | 448 |
| Coptic Words | 450 |
| Grammatical Index | 455 |
| Verbal Predication Patterns | 456 |
| Bipartite Patterns | 456 |
| Tripartite Patterns | 456 |
| Further Patterns | 457 |
| Clause Conjugations | 457 |
| Non-Verbal Sentence Patterns | 458 |
| Bibliography | 459 |
| Subject Index | 477 |

List of Abbreviations

The following list of abbreviations pertains mainly, but not only to grammatical abbreviations used in the grammatical description and in the indices.

| | | | |
|---------|--|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Ø | null morpheme | ms(s) | manuscript(s) |
| 1, 2, 3 | person | neg | negated |
| ADJ | adjective | NEG | negation |
| BN | Bibliothèque Nationale | NOM | nominal (subject) |
| CMCL | Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari (www.cmcl.it) | P, PL | plural |
| CNJ | conjunctive | PF | perfect |
| COP | copula | POSS | possessive |
| DEF | definite | PRE | subject preceding the verbal form |
| DEL | deleted | POST | subject following the verbal form |
| DEP | dependent clause | PRT | preterite |
| F | feminine | R | recto |
| f. | folio | REL | relative |
| FUT | future | S | singular |
| IDF | indefinite | SE | subject element |
| INF | infinitive | SUB | subject (+ DEL subject deleted) |
| M | masculine | transl. | translation |
| MONB | Monasterio bianco (White Monastery) followed by letter sequence identifying individual codices | V | verso |
| | | VB | verb |

List of Figures

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Fig. 1: M582 fol. 1 recto | 5 |
| Fig. 2: M582 fol. 11 recto | 26 |
| Fig. 3: M582 fol. 16 recto | 29 |
| Fig. 4: M583 fol. 59 recto | 189 |
| Fig. 5: M583 fol. 75 recto | 192 |
| Fig. 6: M583 fol. 64 verso | 195 |
| Fig. 7: M583 fol. 7 recto | 315 |
| Fig. 8: M583 fol. 8 recto | 318 |
| Fig. 9: M583 fol. 11 recto | 319 |

Part I:

The Martyrdom of St Phoibamon of Preht

Pierpont Morgan Codex M582, ff. 1R–20V (CMCL 0297)

Sami Uljas

Introduction

Transmission of the Text

A number of Coptic witnesses of the Martyrdom of St Phoibamon of Preht have survived until modern times, scattered among several, mainly European collections. Besides Pierpont Morgan Library M582 edited here, which is the sole manuscript to preserve the text in its entirety, there are – or, at least were until relatively recently – four other sources of the text in existence, viz.:

- a) British Library (formerly British Museum) Or. 6012:
part of a single papyrus leaf
- b) British Library Or. 7561, ff. 67–69:
three fragmentary pages of a papyrus codex
- c) British Library Or. 7561, ff. 114, 116 & 117:
three papyrus fragments
- d) Bayerische Landesbibliothek (Munich), Hs. koptisch 3, ff. 52–58:
seven fragmentary papyrus leaves

A number of unedited Arabic and Ethiopic versions of the work and encomia of the martyr have also been reported in the Coptic Museum in Cairo as well as in Leipzig, Munich, and the Vatican.¹ Some of these, however, do not in fact relate to St Phoibamon of Preht but rather to his namesake of whom more will be said below.²

¹ According to Graf (*Catalogue*, 274/no. 717.5 and *Geschichte*, 538) and Bachatly et al., (*Mon. Phoebammon* I, 13), these include Cairo Hist. 138 ff. 140R–150v; 275; 474 ff. 131R–180v; 712 f. 281R; 717 ff. 131R–180v; Leipzig Univ. Or. 1064; Munich Or. 948 ff. 143R–162v and Vatican Ar. 172 ff. 189v–213v. An Ethiopic translation of the latter occurs in BL (<BM) Eth. MS 256 f. 9; 257 f. 34, and 258 f. 42 (Graf, *Geschichte*, 538 n.5).

² Thus e.g. the miracles of Abu Bifam (= Phoibamon) in Leipzig Univ. Or. 1064 as described by Vollers (*Kat. Leipzig*, 376/no. 1064) clearly relate to Phoibamon of Bushim (see below). The same holds also with the encomium by Nilus, the Bishop of Tacha in Vatican Ar. 172 ff. 192v–213v noted by Graf (*Geschichte*, 538; see also n.46 below). On the other hand, according to Crum (in *Epiphanius* I, 110; cf. O’Leary, *Saints*, 231), the *acta* Phoibamon “the soldier” in ff. 189R–192R of this same manuscript “is much the same

Before describing the contents of the Pierpont Morgan manuscript and its appearance, some notes are in order concerning the other Coptic witnesses of St Phoibamon's martyrdom listed above. The London leaf BL (<BM) Or. 6012 apparently formed part of the finds of Coptic mss and fragments made between 1895 and 1907 in and around the White Monastery near Sohag by E.A.W. Budge under the auspices of the British Museum.³ It was subsequently described and transcribed by Crum in his 1905 catalogue of Coptic texts in the British Museum.⁴ The fragments BL Or. 7561 ff. 67–69, 114, 116 & 117 as well as the Munich leaves Bayerische Landesbibliothek Handschrift koptisch 3, ff. 52–58 were all bought, according to the original purchaser Harris, “at Thebes” in 1846.⁵ Two years after this transcripts of them were made by one A. Des Rivières, and these and the fragments themselves ended up, through various hands, in London and Munich.⁶ The folia BL Or. 7561 ff. 67–69 were presented to the British Museum in 1910 and described first by Crum and later in more detail by Layton.⁷ The fragments ff. 114, 116 & 117, again described by Layton, were part of the same gift.⁸ The Bayerische Landesbibliothek fragments and Des Rivières's transcripts had reached Munich by 1875 when they were described by de Lagarde in the catalogue of Oriental mss of the library.⁹ However, both have been reported as lost since the early 1970s.¹⁰

here as in the Coptic (Morgan)”.

³ See Budge, *By Nile and Tigris*, vol. 2, 341. The appearance of the name of Reverend C. Murch (Bierbrier, *Who Was Who*, 392) in Crum's entry for the fragment (*Cat. BM*, no. 999/p. 414) gives the impression that it was acquired by or from him. According to Budge, this is not the case (*ibid.*, 341 n.4).

⁴ See the previous note.

⁵ For what follows, see Layton, *Cat. BL*, xxxiii–xxxv.

⁶ Shisha-Halevy, in *Or* 44 (1975), 150; Layton, *Cat. BL*, xxxiv; cf. Crum, *Cat. BM*, 414b n.1. For the enigmatic M Des Rivières and his transcripts, see Layton, *ibid.*, xxxiv, n.37; Galtier, in *BIFAO* 5 (1906), 88–91. Cf. also Crum, in *PSBA* 25 (1903), 267 and Winstedt, in *PSBA* 28 (1906), 137.

⁷ Crum, in *Epiphanios* I, 205; Layton, *Cat. BL*, 204–05 (cat. no. 167).

⁸ Layton, *Cat. BL*, 159 (cat. no. 138).

⁹ de Lagarde in Aumer, *Cat. Monacensis* I/IV, 99; cf. Crum, *Cat. BL*, 414n.1; Spanel, in *CE* 6, 1963. Layton (*Cat. BL*, xxxiv) states that the material reached Munich “sometime before 1906”, but seeing that they are described in Aumer's 1875 catalogue, the date can be narrowed down to somewhere between this and the year 1848.

¹⁰ This was the outcome of an inquiry to the Bayerische Landesbibliothek by Prof. A. Shisha-Halevy in 1974 (Shisha-Halevy, in *Or* 44 [1975], 150).



Fig. 1: M582 fol. 1 recto

It is clear that the codex of which BL Or. 6012 forms a small and currently the only extant part, once contained an identical version of the martyrdom of St Phoibamon as M582. The correspondence between the texts runs as follows:

BL Or. 6012 recto = M582 f. 11v a36–b16
 verso = M582 f. 12R a33–b5

By contrast, BL Or. 7561 ff. 67–69 and 114, 116, & 117 show a different recension of the text, although ff. 67–69, which are consecutive, do not in fact originate in the same codex as ff. 114, 116 & 117. Given the bad preservation of the fragments and the often wide differences between them and the Pierpont Morgan M582 version, textual correspondences between the mss are occasionally difficult to fix. Nevertheless, the following matches may be made with some certainty:¹¹

BL Or. 7561 f. 67 recto = M582 f. 5v a9–26
 verso = M582 f. 5v a27–b14
 f. 68 recto = M582 f. 5R a13–34
 verso = M582 f. 5R a35–5v a9
 f. 69 recto = M582 f. 4v b5–28
 verso = M582 f. 4v b28–5R a13
 f. 114 recto = M582 f. 19R b25–30
 verso resembles M582 f. 20R b19–21
 f. 116 recto = M582 f. 18v a11–b8
 verso = M582 f. 18v b11–35
 f. 117 recto resembles M582 f. 20v b15–16 & 24–26
 verso resembles M582 19v a3f

Transcript and translation of the larger London fragments ff. 67–69 and 116 will be given in an appendix to the present chapter and a transcript of the smaller ones (insofar as these are readable) in the notes to the translation of Pierpont Morgan M582 below. Seeing that the lost Munich leaves Bayerische Landesbibliothek Handschrift koptisch 3, ff. 52–58 were undoubtedly once part of the same manuscript as BL Or. ff. 67–69 or ff. 114, 116 & 117, they will also have contained the variant recension of the *passio*.

Excluding the Arabic version(s), the surviving material thus testifies to

¹¹ Cf. Layton, *Cat. BL*, 159, 205.

the onetime existence of no less than four codices containing at least two recensions of the martyrdom of St Phoibamon: one originally at the Monastery of Archangel Michael near Hamuli; one in Shenoute's White Monastery; and at least two, as Crum put it, "in the possession of Theban ascetics".¹² The Theban connection is particularly intriguing since, as shall be seen shortly, there has been some uncertainty and scholarly disagreement over the possible connection of St Phoibamon of Preht with Thebes and his status there as a tutelary saint of local religious establishments (see further below).

Historical and Geographic Aspects of the Passio

As in most Coptic martyrdoms, the events in the *passio* of St Phoibamon of Preht are presented as having occurred during the great persecution instigated by Emperor Diocletian (AD 284–305).¹³ In Pierpont Morgan M582 the date of the saint's martyrdom is given as the 1st of Paone¹⁴ in Diocletian's first year, when the emperor purportedly published an edict proscribing the Christian faith.¹⁵ In reality, Diocletian's first edict against Christians, which initially targeted mainly the clergy and church property, was issued only in February AD 303 and was followed a year later by the fourth and most wide-ranging anti-Christian proclamation ordering every one to sacrifice to the imperial gods or face execution.¹⁶ Phoibamon's martyrdom will, with all likelihood, have taken place following the promulgation of the latter order. This is further suggested by the list of individuals that are said to have held office at the time of Phoibamon's suffering, although here too certain anachronisms are apparent. According to the Pierpont Morgan text, at the time the office of *hypatos* (ὑπάτος), or consul, was held by one "Cullianos" (ΚΟΥΛΙΑΝΟΣ) and that of the *dux*

¹² Crum, in *Epiphanius* I, 196; cf. Layton, *Cat. BL*, xxxiv.

¹³ For a comprehensive discussion of Diocletian's role in Coptic hagiographies, see van der Berg-Onstwedder, in *BSAC* 29 (1990), 87–122.

¹⁴ 26 May in the Julian and 8 June in the Gregorian calendar.

¹⁵ M582 f. 1R, a7–9, 25–28.

¹⁶ Of the many similar accounts, the description by Williams (*Diocletian*, 170–85) of the escalating conflict between the Roman state and the Christians under Diocletian is particularly lively. Variance of dates here is not at all rare in Coptic martyrdoms, where the edict and/or the start of the persecution is placed variously on the 3rd, 15th, 18th, and 19th year of Diocletian (van der Berg-Onstwedder, in *BSAC* 29 (1990), 104–05).

(military commander) of Thebaïs by Maximinian. “Cullianos” is certainly Clodios Culcianus, the prefect of Egypt between AD 301–06 and an arch-persecutor of Christians in numerous Coptic hagiographies.¹⁷ By contrast, other Coptic martyrdoms do not feature a *dux* called Maximinian,¹⁸ but, as will be discussed below, this man is possibly to be identified with a certain Roman official who held office only in AD 308–09 (or 310). The historicity of the other officials listed in the *passio* – Soterichus the *eparch* (ἐπαρχος) or prefect of the city,¹⁹ Romanos the general (στρατηλάτης) of the palace, and Philippus the *sticholêtikos* or commander of a file of soldiers – is not certain, although Romanos is surely the impious father of the famed St Victor the General appearing in great many Coptic martyrdoms.²⁰ Overall, the list mixes real historical figures, whose exact chronological position was only vaguely recalled, with perhaps wholly fictional characters.²¹ It also strongly resembles a corresponding list inserted at the beginning of the martyrdom of SS Apaïoule and Pteleme, where Culcianus, Soterichus, and Romanos again appear, and which, like the *passio* of St Phoibamon, derives from a Hamuli manuscript.²² Nevertheless, the temporal frame of the martyrdom may be narrowed down to the period shortly after AD 304 following Diocletian’s fourth edict ban-

¹⁷ Although he is known from many documentary texts, scholars disagree over the date of Culcianus’ assumption of his prefectorate. According to Vandersleyen (*Chronologie*, 12, 73–77, 88, 93) this took place in AD 302 whereas Jones, Martindale & Morris give the date as AD 303 (*Prosopography*, 233–34) and Barnes (*New Empire*, 149) as AD 301. Besides Coptic sources, Culcianus is portrayed as a persecutor of Christians also by Eusebius (*Ecl. Hist.* IX, 11:4, tr. Williamson, *Eusebius*).

¹⁸ See van der Berg-Onstwedder, in *BSAC* 29 (1990), 105 for the usual suspects.

¹⁹ The martyrdom of St Macarius of Antioch also features a Soterichus, the *eparch* of the town of Bushim (*AdM*, 74).

²⁰ See *BCM*, xxiii–xxxvi. Romanos often plays an active role in inciting Diocletian to publish his edict and start the persecution of Christians – see e.g. the martyrdoms of SS Eusebius (*AdM*, 23) and Shenoufe *et al.* (*R&B, Mart.*, 83–84).

²¹ Cf. the similar opinion expressed by Spanel, in *CE* 6, 1963–64. See also Delehay, *Passions*, 242; but cf. *R&B, Mart.*, 7–8.

²² Pierpont Morgan M583 ff. 168r–173r; see *R&B, Mart.*, 131. Here Culcianus is again *hypatos* and Romanos a general, but now Soterichus appears as ἀρχος ἐτεχώρα τῆς ἡπείρου “Prefect of all the land up to the Ethiopians”. The text adds also the names of Euhius and Basilides absent from the version in *passio* Phoibamon. These two men, along with Romanos, appear as companions of Diocletian also e.g. in the Martyrdom of St Claudius of Antioch (Godron, *St Claude*, 434).

ning Christian practises and compelling his subjects to demonstrate their loyalty to the crown through public sacrifice to the imperial gods.

According to the Pierpont Morgan text, St Phoibamon suffered a martyr's death outside the city of Assiut, where he was brought from the military camp (καστρον, Lat. *castrum*) of Preht (πρε2τ), the Abraht of the Arabic *passio* of Phoibamon in Cairo Hist 275 and of the *acta* of certain other Coptic saints.²³ The location of this place is not known, but given the description in the martyrdom of Phoibamon's journey upstream to Antinoë and on to Assiut,²⁴ it must have lain north of both these major towns. It was also probably near Touho (τοϋ2ω), modern Taha al-'Amida north of Minya,²⁵ named in the *miracula* following the *passio* in M582 (see below) as the place of birth of the martyr.²⁶ The subsequent memory of St Phoibamon was kept alive at various places across the area containing these localities and beyond. According to the *miracula*, he had a *topos*, or shrine, at Touho, which under the reign of Theodosius I was to become a scene of a series of miracles that began sometime between AD 383–88.²⁷ Concrete evidence of this shrine is not forthcoming. The *miracula* mentions two further places of worship dedicated to the memory of St Phoibamon of Preht. The first of these was a chapel (εὐκτήριον) at Pshosh (πϣοϣ), an unknown locality south of Antinoë,²⁸ and the other a *topos* at Thône (θωνε), i.e. Tuna el-Gebel.²⁹ The latter may or may not be

²³ See Bachatly *et al.*, *Mon. Phoebammon* I, 13; Amélineau, *Géographie*, 12; Crum, *Theol. Texts*, 164 n.1; cf. Crum, in *Epiphanius* I, 109.

²⁴ See §§111–34 below.

²⁵ M582 f. 21R b8–14. For the identification, see Kessler, *Topographie*, 42; cf. Amélineau, *Geographie*, 471–72.

²⁶ F. 21R b7–13. Bachatly *et al.* (*Mon. Phoebammon*, 13) translate a passage from the Arabic version of the martyrdom of Phoibamon in Cairo Hist 275 where the *dux* asks the saint whether he is “le soldat, (originaire) de Tahâ (at-Tahâouî) qui est de la forteresse d'Abraht”. This suggests that Touho and Preht, if not quite identical, were very close to each other.

²⁷ The first two miracles involved Theodosius himself (ff. 21R a28–22R a5), who according to the text gave Touho its Greek name *Theodosiopolis* (f. 22R b34–22R a4; cf. Kessler, *Topographie*, 42 & n.166; Amélineau, *Géographie*, 471–72). Schenke, in *ZAC* 20 (2016) discusses the character and special practical and other features of the later cult of Phoibamon.

²⁸ M582 f. 26R a1–8.

²⁹ This *topos* appears in the fifth miracle (M582 ff. 24R a7–25R a32) involving a man from Ashmunein who wished to make a trip to the shrine of St Phoibamon in Touho to obtain healing, but could not travel there because of his illness. He subsequently saw the

one of the three Hermopolite shrines known from documentary sources as having been dedicated to a St Phoibamon, and there is similar evidence of a good many other such sites sacred to the memory of saints thus named.³⁰ However, apart from such exceptions as the church of Phoibamon at Abnub near Assiut,³¹ linking these with St Phoibamon of Preht has turned out to be rather difficult due to his confusion with another saint with the same name.

The Main Protagonists

The hero in the story of the Martyrdom of St Phoibamon was, as noted, a native of the town of Touho, who had reportedly reached the age of thirty-one when he was put to death.³² By that time he had probably been a Christian for some years.³³ Besides this, and the information given in the *passio* that he was born to unnamed pagan parents and had a Christian sister³⁴ called Sarah, nothing further is known about St Phoibamon, including whether he is a historical figure or a mere fictional product of imagination. He is one of three³⁵ Coptic martyrs named Phoibamon.³⁶ Besides Phoibamon (Bifâmon) son of John who has an entry in the Ethiopian *synaxar* on 5th of Sanê,³⁷ in the Copto-Arabic *synaxar* the mar-

saint in a dream and was told to go to the Thône shrine instead (f. 24R b25–31). For the identification of Thône as Tuna el-Gebel, see Kessler, *Topographie*, 19, 108.

³⁰ See Papaconstantinou, *Culte des saints*, 204–12.

³¹ Horn, *Studien*, 142–46.

³² M582 f. 2R b9–10 (§20).

³³ Spanel (in *CE* 6, 1963) gives the number of years as four. This is based on a remark by Phoibamon's father in M582 f. 7R b10–12 (§84), but, as shall be discussed later, the chronological implications of this are rather unclear (see §84 in the translation).

³⁴ Erroneously identified as his mother by Spanel, in *CE* 6, 1963. The fact that Phoibamon's sister was equally pious as he himself is one of the standard clichés of Coptic martyrologies (cf. R&B, *Mart.*, 2).

³⁵ Or more, if e.g. the similarly named side figures killed in the martyrdoms of SS Shenoufe and Claudius of Antioch are also included (see R&B, *Mart.*, 83–127; Godron, *St Claude*, 454).

³⁶ Crum (in *Epiphanius* I, 110) quotes Maspero's opinion that given the frequent writing of the name of the saints as ΦΙΒΑΜΩΗ (also in M582), it should be understood as formed of *phib-* rather than (god) *Phoebus*. However, the *phib-* version may simply reflect the actual pronunciation of the name: M582 offers also the versions ΦΟΒΑΜΩΗ (14R b20–21) and ΦΙΒΑΜΟΥ (12R a11–12).

³⁷ *PO* 1, 557–58. This Phoibamon was executed by the infamous persecutor Arianos.

tyrdom of a St Phoibamon (Bifâm) is commemorated on 1st of Paone.³⁸ This saint, given the correspondence of the date of his martyrdom with that in M582, is clearly St Phoibamon of Preht. His feast on this day is also listed among those celebrated at Shenoute's White Monastery,³⁹ as is the consecration of a church of Bifâm in the calendar of Abû al-Barakât.⁴⁰ Yet, on 27th of Tubah the Copto-Arabic *synaxar* commemorates another Phoibamon – a Roman noble from Bushim (Letopolis) martyred at Tamâ, north of Qau (Antinopolis).⁴¹ The accompanying entry summarises an Arabic encomium to this saint by Theodore, bishop of Latopolis.⁴² The praises of the same man are also sung in the *Difnar*, the *Theotokia*, and the *Triadon*.⁴³ The Chester Beatty Library in Dublin houses a number of papyrus fragments that seem to be remnants of his *passio* in Coptic.⁴⁴ The surviving sources show a clear amalgamation of Phoibamon of Bushim and Phoibamon of Preht. In the *Difnar* hymn dedicated to Phoibamon of Bushim the saint is referred to as “soldier”, a “term properly belonging to his namesake”,⁴⁵ and in the Arabic material the confusion between SS Phoibamon of Preht and Bushim is particularly clear.⁴⁶ It is little wonder then that modern scholarship has faced a diffi-

³⁸ See PO 17, 530.

³⁹ Papaconstantinou, *Culte des saints*, 416. See P. Vindobona K. 9734R, 4 (FS *Papyrus-sammlung* Rainer I, 201 & II, pl. 15) and BL (<BM) 146 (Crum, *Cat. BM*, 33).

⁴⁰ PO 10, 272. In the *synaxar* the consecration of a church of Phoibamon appears under 27th of Epip (PO 17, 693), but it is unclear whether this is the soldier from Preht or his namesake from Bushim – see below.

⁴¹ For the *synaxar* entry, see PO 11, 711–26; O'Leary, *Saints*, 229–31; Pietersma & Comstock, in *BASP* 24 (1987), 148–49. See also Sauget, in *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* 5; Bachatly *et al.*, *Mon. Phoebammon*, 11–12; Spanel, in *CE* 6, 1964; Walter, *Warrior Saints*, 235.

⁴² Vatican MS Ar. 172 (J. 1345), ff. 110v–188r & Cairo Hist. 723A, ff. 107r–122r. See Graf, *Geschichte* vol. 1, 538.

⁴³ See O'Leary, *Difnar* II, 28; Tuki, Θεοτοκία, 183–84; von Lemm, *Triadon*, 4.

⁴⁴ pChester Beatty 2029; see Pietersma & Comstock, in *BASP* 24 (1987), 147–54.

⁴⁵ Crum, in *Epiphanius* I, 109. More particularly, he is said to have been chosen by God “as a soldier” and eulogised as “the victorious soldier” (νικητοῦ στρατοῦ); see O'Leary, *Difnar* II, 28.

⁴⁶ Thus e.g. the Arabic *acta* St Bifâm preserved on Vat. Ar. 172, which according to Crum (in *Epiphanius* I, 110) and O'Leary (*Saints*, 231) corresponds to the narrative found in Pierpont Morgan M582, is nevertheless said to have been written by bishop Theodore of Bushim (Maio, *Scriptorum Veterum* IV, 312). The encomium in the same ms of St Bifâm, celebrated on 1st of Paone, is attributed to Nilus, who, as noted earlier (n.2 above) was “episcopi civitatis Tachae”, i.e. Touho, the birthplace of Phoibamon of Preht. However, this work describes events that have nothing to do with those in the *passio* or *miracu-*

cult task in trying to deduce which of the two Phoibamons (if either) was the tutelary deity of the many religious centres known from documentary evidence as having been sacred to the memory of a St Phoibamon.⁴⁷ The problem has been particularly acute in western Thebes, where two important monastic communities named after St Phoibamon once existed. What seems to have been an earlier of these was located between Armant and Medinet Habu and was founded by Abraham, the bishop of Armant, who is thought to have later moved some 10km north to found another similarly named settlement at Deir el-Bahri.⁴⁸ It is not known for certain which Phoibamon was the saint to whom these famous monastic centres were dedicated. Nevertheless, although noting that in the “distinctly Theban” (Copto-Arabic) *synaxar* the saint from Bushim figures much larger than Phoibamon of Preht, Crum pointed out that on an ostrakon from Deir el-Bahri (*O.Crum* 455) listing religious festivals the $\pi\rho\upsilon\tau\eta\varsigma\ \eta\alpha\gamma\iota\alpha\ \phi\iota\beta\alpha\mu\eta$ “Day of Apa Phoibamon” follows the dates for Ascension and Pentecost, which is only compatible with 1st of Paone – the memorial day of Phoibamon of Preht.⁴⁹ Similarly, Khater and Khs-Burmester believed (although without solid evidence) the tutelary saint of the earlier settlement between Armant and Medinet Habu to have been the same individual.⁵⁰ Overall, the sparse chronological data mentioning a “Day of Phoibamon” usually seem to relate to the main protagonist of the *passio* in Pierpont Morgan M582.⁵¹ His apparent posthumous popularity must have

la of this saint in M582 (Maio, *ibid.*, 313).

⁴⁷ See Timm, *Ägypten* III, 1378–94 and Papaconstantinou, *Culte des saints*, 204–14 for the material.

⁴⁸ Krause, in *BSAC* 27 (1985) and *id.*, in *3rd CoptCongr.*, 203–05. Earlier, the problem centred on the question of which of the monasteries was the “actual” Monastery of St Phoibamon known from a mass of texts from the town of Djeme; representative examples of the opposing views are Deloro in *CdE* 47 (1949), 177 vs. Schiller, in *2KRU*, 3. For one or both of the monasteries in general, see also Bachatly, in *Archaeology* 4 (1951), 13–15; Bachatly *et al.*, *Mon. Phoebammon* I–III; Godlewski, in *É&T* 12 (1983), 93–98; Krause, in *MDAIK* 37 (1981); Godlewski, *Deir el-Bahari* V. Cf. also Krause, in *MDAIK* 25 (1969).

⁴⁹ Crum, in *Epiphanius* I, 110. So too Papaconstantinou, *Culte des saints*, 213.

⁵⁰ Bachatly *et al.*, *Mon. Phoebammon* I, 14–15.

⁵¹ According to Papaconstantinou (*Culte des saints*, 212–13), a document from Aphrodito refers to preparations for this event in an entry for 23rd of Pachon (18 May) that will probably have been written some days previously. If so, the latter might well have been the memorial of Phoibamon of Preht on 1st of Paone (26 May). Similarly, a calendar from Saqqara (Quibell, *Apa Jeremias*, 69–71/no. 226) places “day of Phoibamon” between

prompted the creation of the martyrology found on this and the other manuscripts noted earlier on.

As for the other characters featuring in the *passio*, many of these remain anonymous or otherwise unknown. The first holds, as noted, for the parents of St Phoibamon, who play a prominent and rather negative role in the story. The (other) villainous characters in the tale are similarly rather shadowy. Flavian, St Phoibamon's commanding officer and the target of his first mutinous acts is unknown from elsewhere. However, *dux* Maximinian, his principal interrogator and tormentor, is likely to be identified as one Aurelius Maximinus who held the office of *Dux Aegypti Thebaidos Utrarumque Libyarum* between AD 308–09 (or 310).⁵²

The most interesting subsidiary figures in the story are five fellow soldier martyrs of Phoibamon – Orsunuphius and Ischerion from the garrison (παρεμβολή) of Esna, and Belpsius, Origen, and Peter from the garrison of Aswan – whom he met at the gates of Assiut shortly before facing *dux* Maximinian. These men, of whom the text notes one was a deacon, are known figures. There exists an Ethiopic martyrdom of the same five men,⁵³ where Orsunuphius, Peter, and Ischerion are portrayed as soldiers from the *castrum* of Diospolis. They refused to sacrifice to the imperial gods, and after their commanding officer had failed to change their minds, they were sent to Assiut, where they met their fellow soldiers Origen and Belpsius, the latter of whom is here revealed to have been the deacon in the group. All were subsequently tortured by a nameless *dux* at a public bath house. Orsunuphius was hanged upside down and died already on his day of arrival. The others were shut into a building, where they perished one by one. As shall be seen, these events find exact parallels in *Passio* Phoibamon. The five martyrs are also commemorated together in the Ethiopic *synaxar* on 7th of Sanê.⁵⁴ Besides M582, Coptic sources on these men are not particularly abundant.⁵⁵ What appear to be

the memorial days of St George (28th of Pharmouthi = 23 April) and that of St Michael (12th of Paone = 6 June). The day in question can only have been the day of St Phoibamon of Preht.

⁵² Jones, *Later Roman Empire* I, 44; Jones *et al.*, *Prosopography*, 579. Cf. also Lacau, in *ASAE* 34 (1934), 22–23.

⁵³ Edited by Conti Rossini, in *Or* 7 (1938), 193–214, 319–32.

⁵⁴ See *PO* 1, 562–66.

⁵⁵ In addition to the literary sources noted above, a St Orsunuphius is also mentioned together with another named Peter on a lamp currently in the British Museum (BM EA

parts of a separate *passio* featuring St Orsunuphius as the principal figure are preserved on the fragmentary British Library Or. 7561 ff. 52–53 & 73.⁵⁶ A separate martyrdom of Ischerion is summarised in a lengthy entry in the Copto-Arabic *synaxar* on 7th of Paone.⁵⁷ According to this source, Ischerion, a native of Qalin, disobeyed Diocletian's edict, cursed the emperor and his idols and was imprisoned at Assiut. Five other soldiers, including Peter and Belpsius, agreed to share his fate. Ischerion was tortured by a governor, but the Lord healed his wounds, whereas some of his fellow martyrs were crucified and others beheaded. Ischerion then humbled a pagan magician who challenged him, and after further tortures he too was beheaded. Although there are various major differences between all these sources⁵⁸ as well as between them and the martyrdom of St Phoibamon, given the similarities just seen and the ones to be noted shortly, there is little doubt that the latter work and the martyrdoms of Phoibamon's comrades-in-arms form one wider literary tradition. Indeed, it seems likely that *passio* Phoibamon was once part of a larger cycle of hagiographies of soldier martyrs⁵⁹ that included also the martyrdom of the five soldiers surviving only in Ethiopic, a lost *passio* Ischerion summarised in the Copto-Arabic *synaxar*, and a separate *passio* Orsunuphius whose scant remains are preserved in British Library Or. 7561 ff. 52–53 & 73.

The final character in the *passio* deserving a special mention is a pagan magician Alexander, who challenged St Phoibamon to a contest of magic. As noted, a very similar episode is recounted also in the *synaxar*

20777; see Bailey, *Cat. Lamps*, 267/no. Q2211 & fig. 140/p. 134). Cf. also Crum, in *Epiphanius* I, 204 n.11. Cf. Papaconstantinou, *Culte des saints*, 162–63.

⁵⁶ Edited by Uljas, in *GM* 243 (2014). Cf. also Layton, *Cat. BM* 153–54/no. 134 and Spänel, in *CE* 6, 1964. The text, when intact, seems to have been near-identical to *passio* Phoibamon. The fragments are certainly not parts of a Coptic translation of the Ethiopic martyrdom of Orsunuphius *et al.* (my thanks are due to Luigi Prada for his help here).

⁵⁷ See *PO* 17, 542–44.

⁵⁸ Besides details such as Peter of Aswan not being executed with the others in *passio* Phoibamon, in the Copto-Arabic *synaxar* the three colleagues of Sakhiroon (= Ischerion), Butros (= Peter), and Oualfius (= Belpsius) are called Armenius, Archius, and Qirayoun (see *PO* 17, 542). The Ethiopic martyrdom does not include the episode with a magician, which appears in *passio* Phoibamon as well as in both the Copto-Arabic and Ethiopic *synaxaria* of Ischerion *et al.* (see below). As pointed out by Conti Rossini (*Or* 7 (1938), 198), this shows that the latter is a translation of the former.

⁵⁹ Cf. Spänel, in *CE* 6, 1964. See also further below.

entry for St Ischerion, St Phoibamon's fellow martyr.⁶⁰ The magician battling Ischerion was, like Phoibamon's challenger, not only capable of charming celestial bodies, and challenged the saint to drink a potion prepared of the poison of a serpent. Both converted to Christianity after being struck by a demonic possession and were called Alexander. Given the close relationship of the two stories overall, these similarities and the appearance of the same man in both are perhaps unsurprising. However, a yet further closely similar episode is found in the martyrdom of St Macarius of Antioch.⁶¹ Also he fought a magician who, like Phoibamon's adversary, sought to overcome the saint's "magic" by using pork and urine, summoned a fearsome serpent that he split in half, prepared an unspeakable but ultimately ineffective magical concoction for the saint to drink, and bore the name of Alexander. The martyrdom of St Macarius is important in that it provides a link between the so-called Basilides- and Julius-cycles of martyrdoms.⁶² Thus if Phoibamon's *passio* was part of a larger cycle of soldier-martyrs as postulated above, this is then likely to have been connected to the Basilides- and Julius cycles through shared thematic and episodic links as well as *dramatis personae*.

Outline of the Narrative

Of the literary works edited in the present volume, the martyrdom of St Phoibamon of Preht, besides being the sole originally Egyptian composition, is the best example of the so-called "epic" style Coptic martyrdoms. The structure of the narrative is based on a standard model discernible also in numerous other hagiographic works that appear to have been mass-produced and read during saints' memorial days.⁶³ As noted, the martyrdom is set against the Great Persecution of Emperor Diocletian, who in the opening of the narrative is presented publishing an edict against all Christians in the empire. Like many Coptic martyrdoms, the text purports to cite the decree verbatim.⁶⁴ The beginning of the narra-

⁶⁰ See again *PO* 17, 543.

⁶¹ *AdM*, 59–61.

⁶² O'Leary, *Saints*, 181. For the cycles, see Baumeister, *Martyr Invictus*, 93–95.

⁶³ See here Delhaye, in *AB* 40 (1922), 138–48, 152; *id.*, *Passions*, ch. 3 (236–315); O'Leary, *Saints*, 14, 19; Baumeister, *Martyr Invictus*, 95, 145–48; R&B, *Mart.*, 3.

⁶⁴ van der Berg-Onstwedder (*BSAC* 29 (1990), 106) argues that the long versions found in the martyrdoms of SS Apatil and Anoub (*AM* I, 89–90; 200–01) are perhaps

tive is rather damaged, but it is clear that the emperor entrusted the edict to someone who delivered it to Egypt. There it was received by an official whose name is again lost, but who was probably the prefect Culcianus residing in Alexandria. He in turn dispatched an unnamed envoy to all of Egypt to publicise the royal decree. Eventually, this messenger reached the Thebaïs and there the *castrum* of Preht. He ordered the camp-commander Flavian to gather together all his men for public sacrifice to the imperial gods. One of the ordinary soldiers present was St Phoibamon, who refused point blank. Instead, he poured scorn on Diocletian and his gods, proclaimed himself a Christian, and denounced the authority of the emperor and his own commanding officers. For this outrage he was imprisoned forthwith.

Seemingly soon afterwards, Phoibamon was visited by his father who asked his son about the reason for his one-man insurrection.⁶⁵ The saint revealed that he was a Christian and insulted his father with his unyielding adherence to the principles of his religion. Deeply offended, Phoibamon's father left, having first accused his son of being a magician in a manner commonplace in this text and in Coptic martyrdoms generally.⁶⁶ After his father's departure, Phoibamon made a solitary prayer to the Lord, which brought about what was to be the first of several appearances of archangel Gabriel. The two had a long discourse, where the angel revealed to Phoibamon an unremittingly bleak vision of the Last Days. Men had, he said, proved to be a lewd and blasphemous lot of brutes lacking all uprightness. For this they were bitterly hated by angels, and only God's mercy and patience had so far warded off their destruction. This negative image of the relationship between angels and men is of interest seeing that it contradicts what may be seen as the standard Coptic tradition, which rather stresses the beneficial role of angels in general and of archangel Michael as the helper and protector of mankind in particular.⁶⁷ Not so in the story of Phoibamon, where the angel informed the saint that the world would be destroyed in a cataclysmic

most authentic. Cf. also Delehay, in *AB* 40 (1922), 139.

⁶⁵ The scene is reminiscent of the quarrel between St Victor and his father (*BCM*, 7–8).

⁶⁶ Here Le Blant, *Persecuteurs & martyrs*, 77–88 is still useful. Cf. also Delehay, *Pas-sions*, 259–60 and van der Berg-Onstwedder, in *BSAC* 29 (1990), 117 n.162.

⁶⁷ See e.g. the eschatological work by PsAthanasius edited by Witte (*Sünden*, 146–47). He discusses this tradition found in a wide variety in Coptic sources (*ibid.*, vol. 2, 155–59).

series of disasters involving storms, fire, dust, darkness, earthquakes, terrifying noise, and other staple calamities of apocalyptic literature.

The story then moves back to the attempts of the camp commander and foremen to convince Phoibamon of the necessity to sacrifice to the state gods. Yet in spite of their best efforts, their attempts to do this failed to make the recalcitrant saint change his mind. Following the advice of the foremen, the camp commander next summoned Phoibamon's parents and asked them to reason with their son. Phoibamon and his father then had another discussion, where the former questioned the foundations of his son's Christian faith. Again none of this had any effect on Phoibamon, who instead launched on a further tirade of insults at his father and in no inexplicit terms told him to leave. His mother, who had thus far maintained respectful silence, now lost her temper at Phoibamon's lack of filial respect, disowned him in the presence of his commanders, and left with her husband. Not yet ready to concede defeat, the camp commander and foremen continued with their fruitless attempts to make Phoibamon budge. The former even offered to accept a blow from the saint as a repayment of the slap that he had given to Phoibamon when he had mutinied. Phoibamon's response to all these efforts was predictably negative. Angry and frustrated, the camp commander and foremen finally gave up and referred the stubborn soldier to Maximinian, the *dux* of Thebais. As so often,⁶⁸ they wrote him a letter, outlined the offences committed by the stubborn saint, and dispatched him under guard to the court of law further south.

The next episode describing a riverine journey is *de rigueur* in almost every Coptic martyrdom,⁶⁹ and in Phoibamon's case even the details thereof are the same as in another *passio*.⁷⁰ Whilst imprisoned in the boat's hold, the saint sang a hymnic prayer to Jesus. Suddenly the vessel stopped in the middle of the river, and the Christ appeared to his devotee. He loosened the saint's fetters, opened the locked door of the hold, and let Phoibamon face the soldiers guarding him. Inebriated and frightened by the sudden appearance of their stark naked prisoner, the soldiers asked what harm had they done to him. Phoibamon asked the same

⁶⁸ Delehay, in *AB* 40 (1922), 139–40.

⁶⁹ Cf. O'Leary, *Saints*, 20.

⁷⁰ The martyrdom of St Nabraha – see Munier, in *BIFAO* 15 (1918), 246–48.

question back, which apparently made the soldiers lose their fear. They bound their former comrade-in-arms anew and threw him back into the boat's hold.

Soon thereafter, the boat arrived at Antinoë, but the soldiers were told that the *dux* had left for the city of Assiut.⁷¹ They followed him there, brought the exhausted Phoibamon to the shore and on to the city gate of Assiut. There he met the five other arrested Christian soldiers, Orsunuphius and Ischerion from Esna and Belphius, Origen, and Peter from the garrison of Aswan. They exchanged some words of comfort at the city gate, and Phoibamon and Origen revealed that they had foreseen their fate in a vision. After this, the men were handed over to the authorities, and soon thereafter Phoibamon found himself before *dux* Maximinian, who was sitting court in a public bath house.⁷² Assisted with his secretary, the *dux*, who is confusingly also referred to as count (ΚΟΜΕΤ, Lat. *comes*), interrogated the saint. The secretary foolishly referred to Christ as the ruler of demons, which prompted Phoibamon to summon one to possess the hapless bureaucrat. Although savagely beaten, the saint refused to exorcise the demon unless the secretary confess to Christian faith. This he promptly did, and the demon departed. The episode is almost identical to that found in another *passio*,⁷³ and parallels are found in many Coptic martyrdoms, where the person possessed or otherwise punished for blasphemy is usually the *dux* or *hegemon* interrogating the saint. As shall be seen, it will reappear in the present story in this its more traditional form.

⁷¹ Despite its seemingly superfluous characters, similar episodes of “not finding the *dux*” appear also e.g. in the martyrdoms of SS Ptolemy (Uljas, in *ZPE* 178 (2010), 181), Claudius of Antioch (Godron, *St Claude*, 444), and Pekjosh (BL (<BM) Or. 3581B f. 51R b6–17), the last of which is almost identical to the present text.

⁷² The choice of a public bath as the scene for Phoibamon's suffering might simply have been due to a need to find a suitably large but easily isolable venue for the proceedings, but it may also reflect the well-known early Christian suspicions concerning such apparently licentious and unpleasantly “pagan” institutions, most memorably voiced by St Jerome during his crusade for women's lifelong virginity.

⁷³ Martyrdom of St Apoli who was similarly incensed by the association of Jesus with a demon and summoned one to possess an eparch. His condition for exorcising it was the same as with Phoibamon, and the demon also screamed out similar words as in the latter story – see *AMI* I, 244.

After his display of power with the secretary of the *dux*, Phoibamon was taken away for further torture, and his colleagues Orsunuphius, Ischerion, Belphius, and Origen were each brought in to sacrifice.⁷⁴ They refused, and were tortured as a consequence. Ischerion and Orsunuphius were in fact of lower birth than Belphius and Origen,⁷⁵ and with them the tormentors showed none of the initial restraint as with the latter two. Orsunuphius was singled out to be hanged upside down on a pillar. Phoibamon too was then brought in again and threatened with further suffering unless he sacrifice. He refused as firmly as before, and had to endure a series of vile tortures. However, at every turn he prayed to the Lord, who miraculously salvaged him from suffering the worst. The *dux*, in towering rage, cursed the entire race of Christians, whereupon Phoibamon prophesised that God would repay his blasphemy. There and then a messenger arrived to tell the *dux* that his only son had died in a freak accident. Deeply upset, the *dux* interrupted the proceedings. He ordered Phoibamon's colleagues to be buried alive in an underground cell without food and drink, save for Orsunuphius, who, as in the Ethiopic martyrdom, was found to have already died of his injuries. The *dux* ordered Phoibamon to be burnt alive in the stokehole of the bath in which the court was sitting. As noted by Reymond & Barns, "The hero of a martyr-ology of any length will certainly find himself shut in a furnace at least once".⁷⁶ The inspiration of all these stories is the tale in the Book of Daniel 3:19–27 of three children, who survived being burnt in a furnace. For this reason incineration of Coptic martyrs is almost never fatal, and so it was to be with St Phoibamon too. After six days of incessant heating, the soldiers performing the task heard the saint singing a hymn to Christ amidst the flames. There he was also visited by archangel Gabriel, who encouraged him to continue his struggle.

⁷⁴ See n.58 above for the absent Peter of Aswan. Whether his omission is due to a common error or whether his interrogation, torture, and (undoubtedly) execution took place somewhere else, is difficult to say.

⁷⁵ In §186 Belphius and Origen are referred to as γένναῖος "noblemen".

⁷⁶ *Martyrdoms*, 17; cf. van der Berg-Onstwedder, in *BSAC* 29 (1990), 91. Others who like Phoibamon suffered this fate specifically in bath stokeholes are SS Macarius of Antioch (*AdM*, 49–50), Epima (Mina, *Epima*, 22–24), Panesnew (*KHML* I, 96), Victor (*BCM*, 24), Shenoufe *et al.* (*R&B, Mart.*, 40, 103), Herpaese & Julian (*BKU* III, 14), and Shnoube (Munier, in *ASAE* 17 (1917), 146). For the construction of contemporary bath stokeholes, see Kolataj, *Imperial Baths*, 15–17.

The soldiers informed the *dux* of what they had heard, and although greatly amazed, he was determined to break the resistance of his apparently superhuman captive. Consequently, he summoned the magician Alexander and asked him to vanquish Phoibamon. Alexander agreed to do this, and after some decidedly bizarre precautions involving the use of urine against the saint's Christian "magic", he summoned a frightful serpent that he magically split in half.⁷⁷ He then used the serpent's poison to prepare a magical potion and urged the saint to drink it. Phoibamon accepted the challenge, uttered a prayer, and drank the potion without it having any effect on him. As with the secretary of the *dux*, he then summoned a demon to possess the magician as a punishment for his blasphemy. Needless to say, this duly happened. The magician confessed to the god of the Christians, for which he was forthwith imprisoned by the *dux*. Episodes describing the saint's duel with a pagan magician, who almost always offers the former a poisonous drink,⁷⁸ are common in Coptic martyrdoms,⁷⁹ and in this respect, too, the story of St Phoibamon conforms to a standard norm.

⁷⁷ Splitting of this sort appears to have been a standard trick of pagan magicians. Apart from the similar feat performed by the same Alexander in the martyrdom of St Macarius of Antioch (see below), the magician summoned to overcome St Elias split two serpents (or "dragons"), having first split a mountain (Sobhy, *Hélias*, 40, 41), and his colleagues battling SS George and Nahrow split an ox(-calf) in two by whispering into its ear (Budge, *George*, 7–8; Chassinat, in *RecTrav* 39 (1921), 96). The inspiration of these stories is undoubtedly the on-off battle between Moses and the Pharaoh's magicians in Ex 7:10–8:11.

⁷⁸ However, that drunk by St George was merely water in which the magician had washed his face and upon which he had evoked names of demons (Budge, *George*, 8).

⁷⁹ Besides the martyrdoms of St Macarius of Antioch and the *synaxar* entry of St Ischerion noted above, see e.g. the martyrdoms of SS Victor (BCM, 37–38), George (Budge, *George*, 7–9), and Jôôre (Rossi, *Martirii*, 30). The most extensive episode of this kind occurs in the *passio* of St Elias (Sobhy, *Hélias*, 34–49). To the same tradition belongs also the story of Astratole, a pagan magician who ventured to hell and was released from there after promising to become a martyr. He is mentioned in the *passio* of St Epima (Mina, *Epima*, 18) and the story is summarised in Shenoufe *et al.* (R&B, *Mart.*, 102–03). A fragment of his martyrdom was published by White (*Monasteries* I, 102–03). He is certainly also the like-named individual famed for his knowledge whom the persecutor Arianos wished to see in the *Passio* Timothy & Martyria, only to find out that he had forsaken pagan gods and had become a Christian (Paris BN 129¹⁶ ff. 9v–10r, see Uljas, in *Le Muséon* 130 (2017), 267–68, 273–75). A comparably themed story is also that of Cyprian of Antioch, who attempted to possess a young Christian woman by means of magic and the help of demons and the devil, but was so disappointed and frightened by the results that

When the commotion involving the magician had subsided, the *dux* resumed his torture of St Phoibamon. The results of this on the latter's resolve not to sacrifice were as negligible as before, and the saint was at every turn saved by miraculous interventions. The *dux* was also personally humiliated in the process: as so often, an idol of a pagan deity which he had proudly brought to oversee the proceedings was smashed to smithereens by Phoibamon's prayers.⁸⁰ At one point the martyr was blinded, but prayed for and was granted his sight anew, after which archangel Gabriel struck blind the *dux* in turn. There then followed a further instance of the standard scene where the *dux* begs the saint to remove his affliction and the latter agrees to do this only after his tormentor has confessed the Christian faith.⁸¹ Once healed, the *dux* attributed the restoration of his sight to the grace of Apollo,⁸² which so infuriated Phoibamon that he committed an act of outright blasphemy against the god of the *dux*. For this he was bestially mutilated and, at last, sentenced to be beheaded. Before being taken away for execution, the saint cursed the *dux*, the soldiers who had maltreated him, and even his parents who had disowned him.

At the place of his execution, Phoibamon prayed to God, and archangel Gabriel again appeared to comfort him. The angel promised further to take care of Phoibamon's *topos*, which he said would also become a site of miracles. Statements like this occur widely in Coptic martyrdoms, and their purport was to attach sanctity to the cults of the martyrs

he converted to Christianity, became a bishop, and died a martyr under Diocletian. The Coptic mss containing his legend and *passio* have been edited by Bilabel & Grohmann (*Texte*, 43–230).

⁸⁰ Sometimes the idol or idols are swallowed by earth (e.g. SS Kradjon & Amoun [White, *Monasteries* I, 112]) or the saint(s) smash them (Shenoufe *et al.*, R&B, *Mart.*, 85, 117). St Isidor ordered an idol to slay the pagan spectators of his torture (BKM, 63) and Thomas of Shentalot (White, *Monasteries* I, 96) sent it to pursue the impious *dux*.

⁸¹ See e.g. SS Nile (Till, *KHML* I, 182–83), Shenoufe *et al.* (R&B, *Mart.*, 118–20), Epima (Mina, *Epima*, 22), and Thomas of Shentalot (White, *Monasteries* I, 96, 99). Cf. also *passio* Lacharon and Anoub (*AM* I, 12; 212–13). In *passio* Apater a large crowd watching the torture of the saint is struck by leprosy and healed only after agreeing to confess Christ (*AdM*, 104). Sometimes this role is played by a group of soldiers torturing the saint (e.g. *passio* Anatolius, *AM* I, 28).

⁸² Cf. the martyrdoms of SS Nile (Till, *KHML* I, 183), Paese & Thekla (R&B, *Mart.*, 66), and Lacharon (*AM* I, 12). In the martyrdom of St George (Budge, *George*, 15–16) a *hegemon* expresses a similar view of a miracle not involving injury on his person.

and their physical memorials.⁸³ Gabriel then agreed to deliver to Phoibamon's sister Sarah her brother's farewell message in which the saint expressed his longing for her and half-forgave their parents. After a few additional words of consolation to his executioners Phoibamon was beheaded, and as in all Coptic martyrdoms, this marked his final demise.⁸⁴ After noting that the three soldiers shut into the cell without food and drink also perished soon afterwards, the *passio* ends with Christ and his angels accepting the saint and his fellow martyrs into heaven.

The Passio as a Work of Literature

Modern scholarship has in the past been somewhat unforgiving in its assessment of Coptic martyrologies, which have been condemned as "miserable" farragos bereft of literary and spiritual merits or artistic value. Such a view is obviously too harsh, and more recently earnest attempts have been made to focus on the exact *Sitz im Leben* of Coptic martyrdoms and their original, intended function(s). It is emphasised that these works of fiction, read at annual celebrations of the saints at their cultic *topoi*, were meant to provide believers with edifying and inspiring tales of faith triumphing over death and suffering, which, given the historical context in which they were most popular, must have satisfied a sorely felt spiritual need. This lies behind the manner in which they were cast into a preordained canon and followed a general template. Their innate predictability and rigidity of construal presumably provided pious audiences with a sense of spiritual reliability and inevitability as well as a collective experience of strengthening of faith, besides things such as contemplative discourses on theology and the practice of religion.

The dictum that a deeper understanding of literary works presupposes due appreciation of their socio-historical context is surely correct and applies also to Coptic martyrdoms. Yet, whether original use and function are their sole "value" or the measure of standards is more debatable. If achieving a calculated effect on a well-defined audience of, say, a Coptic

⁸³ Cf. R&B, *Mart.*, 218 n.206. To the texts listed by these authors one may add e.g. the martyrdoms of SS Elias (Sobhy, *Hélias*, 57–58), Macarius of Antioch, Apater, Pirou & Athom (*AdM*, 66–67, 92–93, 170), Iustus (White, *Monasteries* I, 85), and Herpaese & Julian (*BKU* III, 15).

⁸⁴ van der Berg-Ostwedder (in *BSAC* 29 (1990), 91) argues that this tradition is based on the model of St John the Baptist (Mt 14:8–11).

martyrdom equals quality, then the same must be said also of e.g. modern mass-produced commercial entertainment that through repetition and predictability aims at something similar. Furthermore, although the disparaging attitudes of early scholarship should be revised, a counterreaction thereto does not mean that everything anciently written must be pronounced good. It is no accident that the works of the likes of Sophocles or Julius Caesar are still read and re-read after millennia whereas Coptic martyrdoms are usually not. This is of course partly because the religious and social milieu in which the latter were consumed is gone, but also because good literature transgresses the boundaries of time and place. It arouses thoughts and emotions not dependent of the original temporal or socio-religious context, but resonates with humanity irrespective of the latter.

These issues should be kept in mind if one wishes to assess the Martyrdom of St Phoibamon as a literary text. The pervasive feel of adherence to a set template in its narrative structure relates to what was apparently thought to be the canonical form of a martyrdom and is not a reason for modern opprobrium. Yet it is difficult to remain courteously uncritical of the manner in which the text cuts and pastes in material and characters from other works, plagiarises their actions and sayings down to exact words uttered, and generally avoids originality in phrasing or imagery e.g. when describing the anger of the *dux* or the saintliness of the saint. Except for scenes such as Phoibamon's farewell words to his sister that exude a sense of genuine emotion and spiritual atonement, or his discussion with archangel Gabriel that touches upon interesting theological issues, the author shies away from embellishing the fixed and canonical with a touch of personality or creativity, and remains mostly content with the borrowed and stereotypical. As for his portrayal of St Phoibamon himself, in the original context in which the work was composed and read he naturally represented a paragon of Christian virtue against his pagan adversaries. Yet seen against the background of the bigotry and religion-inspired violence marring the early twenty-first century AD, his fanaticism with his own beliefs is harder to admire. However, certain interesting nuances are observable with other characters. For example, the depiction of Phoibamon's military colleagues at the army camp is not quite as bleak as that of the *dux* later on. In fact, their restraint and patience with the rebellious saint is notable, and the willingness of the com-

mander Flavian to literally turn the other cheek recalls something that Phoibamon might well have appreciated (but did not). Similarly, the words of the saint's father when negotiating with his son are not those of an ignorant infidel but rather reveal a thoughtful and nuanced personality. Phoibamon's moral superiority is unquestionable, but it is not absolute, which might be seen as one of the genuinely original features of the *passio* of St Phoibamon among Coptic martyrdom literature.

Technical Features of the Manuscript

The Pierpont Morgan Library version of the martyrdom of St Phoibamon (clavis 0297) comprises the first twenty leaves (i.e. forty pages) of a nearly complete parchment codex assigned the call number M582 and designated MICH.BU in Tito Orlandi's systematisation of Coptic manuscripts.⁸⁵ Overall, the codex contains 30 leaves, or 60 pages, the last twenty of which are occupied by an account of the posthumous *miracula* of Phoibamon.⁸⁶ This was copied by a monk who identified himself as Colluthos the Stylite⁸⁷ and who was clearly also the copyist of the preceding *passio*. The codicological details and physical characteristics of the codex and its script have been fully described by Depuydt in his catalogue of the Pierpont Morgan Coptic manuscripts.⁸⁸ It thus suffices here to give a mere summary characterisation, as well as to add a few additional details and specifications pertaining to ff. 1–20 in particular.

The rebound leaves of the codex comprise four numbered quires (α: 1R/8V; β: 9R/16V; γ: 17R/24V; δ: 25R/30V). The middle leaves of the first three quires (ff. 4&5, 12&13, 20&21) are single- rather than bifolia,

⁸⁵ See *Corpus dei manoscritti Copti Letterari* at <http://www.cmcl.it/> (last accessed November 2018).

⁸⁶ Edited by K. Verrone, *Mighty Deeds*. The author would like to tender his special thanks to Prof. James Allen of Brown University for providing a copy of this hard-to-find work. The *miracula* are titled (f. 21R) ⲡⲁⲛⲉ ⲛⲟⲛ ⲛⲛⲉⲱⲡⲓⲣⲉ · ⲛⲧⲁⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲁⲗⲩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲁⲧⲟⲟⲧⲓ ⲛⲡⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲗⲗ · ⲁⲡⲁ ⲫⲟⲓⲃⲁⲛⲟⲛ · ⲡⲛⲁⲣⲧⲩⲣⲟⲥ ⲛⲡⲉⲗⲧⲉ ⲧⲉ · ⲛⲛⲓⲛⲥⲁⲧⲉⲫⲛⲁⲣⲧⲩⲣⲓⲁ · ⲁⲩⲱⲩⲉⲣⲛⲛⲛ ⲛⲧⲉⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲁⲙⲛⲛ “These are the mighty and wondrous deeds which God performed through St Apa Phoibamon, the martyr of Jesus Christ after his martyrdom. In God's peace, amen”.

⁸⁷ Folia 29R b34–29V a2 ⲁⲛⲟⲕⲡⲉ ⲕⲱⲗⲟⲩⲱⲥ ⲡⲉⲓⲉⲗⲁⲭⲓⲥⲟⲥ ⲛⲥⲧⲩⲗⲁⲛⲧⲓⲥ ⲛⲧⲉⲧⲡⲟⲗⲓⲥ ⲱⲛⲟⲩⲛ and 30R a9–12: ⲁⲛⲟⲕⲡⲉ ⲕⲱⲗⲟⲩⲱⲥ ⲡⲉⲓⲉⲗⲁⲭⲓⲥⲟⲥ ⲛⲥⲧⲩⲗⲁⲛⲧⲓⲥ ⲛⲛⲟⲛⲟⲭⲟⲥ “I am Colluthos, this humble (ἐλάχιστος) stylite monk of the city of Shmoun”.

⁸⁸ Depuydt, *Cat.*, 269–71/no. 136).

with stubs visible inside. The organisation of the pages follows the Gregory rule; hair and flesh sides are distinguishable by colour and follicles, and quires begin with flesh. A small dark-brown leather tag attached to the centre outer edge of f. 20 marks the end of the *passio* and the beginning of the *miracula*. The pages, with the original size of ca. 340 × 260 mm, are well preserved, although ff. 1–3 have been remargined in modern parchment, and many of the leaves have been trimmed at the edges, resulting in cropping and, at times, loss of original page numbers.⁸⁹ Some have also suffered rubbing, staining, fading, and smudging. The worst affected page is 1R, which has been badly rubbed (see Fig. 1). This has resulted in some loss of text in col. a and rather more so in col. b, which is almost wholly illegible from l. 24 onwards. There are also two irregularly shaped tears in the parchment, one extending across both columns of text approximately level with ll. 11–15, and another one in col. b extending over what were once ll. 33–35. Both these tears, restored with modern paper, are associated with large dark brown stains resulting from a liquid substance spilled over the page, which weakened the parchment and also resulted (probably in the process of drying) in the formation of the two tears just noted. Fortunately, already the verso of f. 1 is free from rubbing. The lower tear of f. 1 is no longer present in f. 2 or thereafter, and although the upper one is still open and associated with a large stain, the latter does not have the effect of obscuring the text, which, some slight exceptions notwithstanding, remains legible. Also the upper tear of f. 1 is closed by f. 3, and the stain associated with it becomes smaller by each successive leaf, finally disappearing from the written area after f. 11R. After this, the leaves are practically free from stains (compare Figs. 2 & 3). Moderate fading, however, begins thereafter, and affects particularly ff. 12V, 15R, 16V, 17R, 19R, and 20V. In addition, ff. 13R/V and 18R in particular have suffered from smudging of the text resulting from the wet ink of the text on the reverse side of the parchment shining through. Nevertheless, with the exception of col. 2 of f. 1R, most of the damage to the pages is seldom severe enough to prevent either reading or feasible restoration. In this context, a mention should also be made of original holes in the parchment as well as repairs made to the pages in antiquity.

⁸⁹ ΚΓ, ΚΑ, ΚΒ, ΚΣ, ΛΑ, and ΛΖ are notably cropped; ΚΘ and Λ are lost completely.



Fig. 2: M582 fol. 11 recto

As noted by Depuydt, “roughly a fifth of the leaves have original holes, many irregular at tail, several wholly irregular”.⁹⁰ In the martyrdom, these manufacturing defects occur on ff. 3, 4 (largest), 12, and 18 (twice). There are two original repairs: one on f. 16, where a long tear extending over ll. 33–35 (on verso) and 33–36 (on recto) of the outer text column was sewn with white thread, and on f. 19, where a shorter gash over the last line of the inner column was similarly treated.

The text is written on both sides of the ruled and pricked leaves in two columns that in ff. 1R–16V have 36 lines each and 35 thereafter. In three cases (13R, 14R, 18R) the copyist added a truncated line, set off by a curved stroke, at the end of col. b. The page numbers occur in the outer top margin and quire-signatures in the inner. The written area is ca. 270 × 205 mm and the height of ten lines ca. 75 mm. The lines are flush left and justified. New lines open paragraphs set off with ekthesis, and (usually) with enlarged initials. The upright (except the right-sloping title on f. 1R) apparently 9th or 10th century AD script displays a narrow εοϛ, short ϣϣϣ, short and sometimes rather wide Ϸ, and a flat and rounded three-stroke η. Supralinear strokes regularly replace η at line-ends, where a space-filler long line or ∴— is used occasionally.⁹¹ The letter ι shows a two-dot trema that appears mostly to indicate a glide in a syllable-final (παῖ/ταῖ/ναῖ, μαρεϣνοῖ, κοῦῖ, πεῖρο, †Ϸτηῖ, εϷραῖ εϷωῖ) or, less often, in some other position (ρεϣῖοϣα, Ϸῖοϣε). It does not seem to mark a syllable-initial glide (εῖωτ). It is also rarely used in purely vocalic environments (μῖηε) and commonly (but irregularly) in Greek loan-words and names (ἐπίλη, κοῖς, χριστιανος, θυςιαζε, οῦκεϣιστῖ, δαμονῖον, μαϣμῖνῖανος). Punctuation is logical and consists of raised points. The thin supralinear strokes are both single and connective. Their length varies from relatively generous strokes, often placed more between characters than above them, to tiny *jinkims* characteristic to manuscripts copied in the Fayyum. Other diacritics are seldom used: in one instance repetitive stanzas of a hymnic prayer are set off by >.⁹²

Decorative motifs and colour are relatively sparingly applied. The middle of the header of f. 1R is occupied by a large red-and-yellow design

⁹⁰ Depuydt, *Cat.*, 270.

⁹¹ Folia 5R b7, b14; 7R b12, b19; 9R b22, b27.

⁹² F. 9R b25–36.

$\overline{\text{TC}}$ + interlace ornament + $\overline{\text{XC}}$.⁹³ Column a on the same page is headed by a standard rectangular headpiece filled with a knotted-rope design coloured with red and yellow, and the title itself is set off by a small dipole cross. The left margin of the title has a dipole or a circled point at the start of each line. After two dividing lines the text sets off with an enormous letter Δ , and down the margin of col. a there runs a vine-scroll coronis held at the bottom by a dove rendered in black outline and standing before another badly damaged bird under col. b.⁹⁴ The other pages containing the martyrdom of St Phoibamon are less amply decorated, save for four instances of the monogram $\overline{\text{TC}}$ in the middle of the header that appears alone (3V) or enclosed within a curved stroke to the left and an inverted dipole (6V), dipole to the left plus an inverted dipole to the right (8V), or simply an inverted dipole to the right (10V). In the text, the enlarged initial characters of new sections are systematically surmounted by either the obelus or the simple, dotted, or budded dipole. Until f. 7v only the former is used, but after this there is a tendency towards using the obelus after dipole and vice versa (e.g. f. 13R & V). However, towards the end the dipole becomes much more common at the expense of the obelus. It also begins to acquire a generous spattering of red colour. The end of the *passio* (f. 20V b) is marked with two dividers and four coronis-signs. Page numbers are ruled above and below, often surmounted by an oblique stroke and surrounded by a dipole and stroke or encircled dot to the left and inverted dipole and curved stroke/encircled dot to the right. Red colour is added to punctuation, usually as a curved stroke, as well as to paragraphus signs, the strokes surrounding the page-numbers, enlarged capitals, and the curved strokes setting apart truncated lines in ff. 13R, 14R, and 18R, col. b.

⁹³ See fig. 1.

⁹⁴ The start of the *miracula* on f. 21R is marked by a similar knotted design rectangle as that on f. 1R, followed by the title, whose each line is set off by a budded dipole. The text proper is preceded by two dividers, and there is again the same vine-scroll coronis + dove motif in the margin and gutter as on f. 1R. There is further dove drawn under col. b of f. 21R and yet another in the same position on f. 23R, where a knotted interlace is inserted in the middle of the header and a vine-scroll in the inner margin. Further similarly placed vine-scroll corona appear on ff. 24V, 26V, 27R (here also a Z-shaped paragraphus). The end of the *miracula* is marked by two dividers (f. 30R).

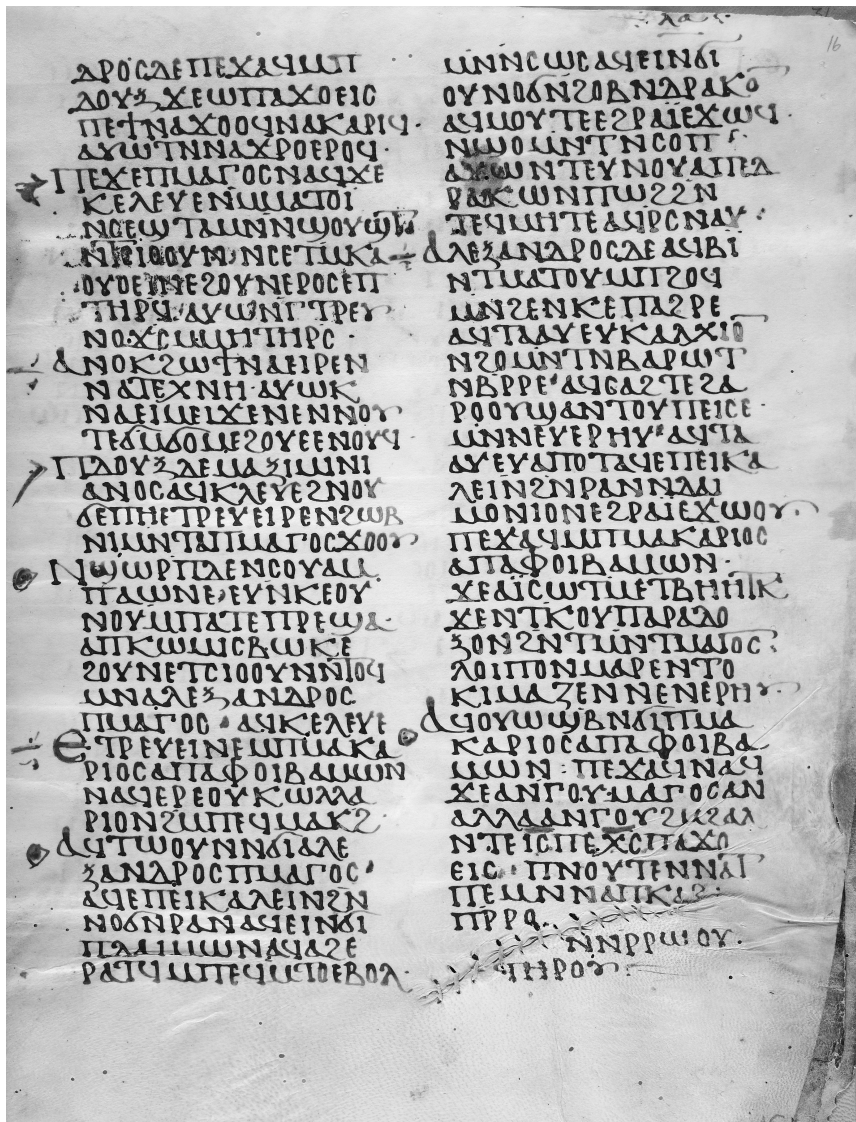


Fig. 3: M582 fol. 13 recto

By and large, the copyist Colluthos may be said to have been a tolerably competent master of his craft. Save for a few strange words and expressions, his text is largely free from features impeding understanding. Yet, although it is of course difficult to know for certain whether an omission has occurred in an ancient text of which no literal parallels exist, there are several instances in the present ms where the co-text suggests that a section of the original text was ignored.⁹⁵ In a few cases small omissions (two characters at most) were corrected above the line. The copyist also made a number of other errors that range from bad spellings and mistakes in forming individual characters to dittography of words, phrases, and entire sections of text. Occasionally, the latter two errors were noticed and rectified, which usually resulted in curiously formed characters or erasures that usually were limited to small gaps left by a removal of a single letter, but in one case to a much longer blank extending over several lines.⁹⁶

Grammar and Graphemic Features

Like all manuscripts from the Hamuli find, the text of the Martyrdom of St Phoibamon and of the entire M582 is written in the Sahidic dialect showing some Fayyumic influences, which in case of the present ms are not extensive.⁹⁷ In verbal morphology they are restricted to the singular occurrence of the relative Aorist form $\eta\omega\alpha\chi\epsilon\rho\eta\omicron\varsigma$ “who grows up” (7R b7) instead of the usual Sahidic $\epsilon\omega\alpha\chi\epsilon\rho\eta\omicron\varsigma$.⁹⁸ The negative Conditional is written without the infix $-\omega\lambda\eta-$ in 8V a14–5 ($\epsilon\kappa\tau\eta\theta\gamma\varsigma\iota\alpha\zeta\epsilon$), 13V a12–3 ($\epsilon\gamma\tau\eta\theta\gamma\varsigma\iota\alpha\zeta\epsilon$) and 13V a31–2 ($\epsilon\kappa\tau\eta\varsigma\omega\tau\eta$), but not in 6V b2–3 ($\epsilon\varsigma\omega\lambda\eta\tau\eta\varsigma\omega\tau\eta$). The second person plural First Future shows the form $\tau\epsilon\tau\eta\alpha-$. The unique spelling $\omega\alpha\tau\epsilon\varsigma\iota$ for the Completive “until he came” (1V a30–1) is probably merely erroneous, as is the form $\epsilon\tau\tau\epsilon-\pi\chi\omicron\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ $\eta\alpha\tau\omicron\gamma\eta\epsilon\varsigma-\omicron\gamma\omicron\eta$ $\eta\eta\mu$ for the relative “(on) which the Lord will

⁹⁵ Sections where this is suspected will be noted in the translation below.

⁹⁶ F. 10R a16–18.

⁹⁷ Descriptions of similar features in other Hamuli manuscripts can be found in Alcock, *Samuel*, viii–ix; Depuydt, *Encomiastica*, xiv–xxi; Garitte, in *OCP* 9 (1943), 109–110; *id.*, in *Le Muséon* 78 (1965), 317–18; Kuhn, *Panegyric*, xiv–xv; Kuhn & Tait, *Hymns*, 12–13; Lafontaine, in *Le Muséon* 92 (1979), 41–42; Witte, *Sünden*, 30–34; and particularly Quecke, *Stundengebet*, 350–89.

⁹⁸ Cf. Depuydt, *Encomiastica* XX, sub. II.4.

resurrect every one” instead of ⲉⲧⲉⲣⲉ- and without resumption. Fayyumic influence is seen also in the occasional writing of Ⲣⲁ in place of ⲥⲟ:

ⲉⲙⲁⲛⲧ “established” (3V a7, 11R b36); ⲉⲁⲓⲧⲉ “prepare” (4R a17); ⲱⲁⲉⲓⲱ “dust” (5V a9); ⲥⲁⲓ “ship” (9R a34); ⲙⲁⲧⲉ “neck” (10R b31); ⲉⲁⲓⲁⲉ “dwell at/visit” (11V b7)

However, the opposite effect is seen in the peculiar writing of pre-pronominal form of the preposition ⲙⲙ- “with” with ⲟ rather than ⲁ (12V b15, 17V a34 ⲙⲙⲟⲓ “with them”; 19R b29 ⲙⲙⲟⲓ “with me”) and of the word ⲙⲁⲉⲓⲛ “sign” as ⲙⲟⲉⲓⲛ (20R a7). Fayyumic-influenced is also the form ⲡⲓⲉⲓ for “trouble” (19R b30) and the sometime writing of a word-final ⲉ as ⲙ:⁹⁹

ⲁⲡⲙ “head” (13V a14, 18V a24); ⲡⲙ “sun” (15V b9, 16R, a22); ⲡⲁⲙⲱⲙ “carpenter” (17V a3); ⲥⲓ-ⲡⲙ-ⲧⲙ “concentrate yourselves” (19R b2)

This phenomenon may also occur before the high-sonority consonants ⲃ, ⲁ, ⲙ, and ⲛ (e.g. ⲙⲙⲧⲧ “east” 3V a28–9; 5R b12; 19R b16; ⲡⲱⲧ-ⲧⲙⲱⲧⲧⲙ “you yourselves” 13R b25; ⲧⲙⲛⲓ “wing”, 15R b19). A further Fayyumic feature is the unique writing of the 1MS prenominal possessive as ⲙⲙⲧⲉ- (ⲙⲙⲧⲉ-ⲧⲉⲡⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ “I have no power”, 8V a27). Rather interesting is the spelling ⲟⲩⲉⲧⲟ for “a horse” (12V b3), which finds parallels in the martyrdom of SS Theodore the Anatolian, Leontius the Arab, and Panigerus the Persian edited elsewhere in the present volume.¹⁰⁰ In the latter text, one finds writings such as ⲙⲉⲩⲉⲧⲟⲱⲡ “with their horses” (M583 62R a12), ⲉⲙⲉⲧⲟⲱⲡ “to the horses” (M583 61R a20) and ⲡⲉⲩⲉⲧⲟ “his horse” (M583 69R b20–1), which appear to show that the standard writing for the word “horse” was ⲉⲧⲟ in the Hamulian Sahidic-Fayyumic variety of Coptic. The copyist shows a tendency to use ⲓ for ⲃ and an even stronger inclination for the reverse in both native and non-native words:¹⁰¹

ⲓ for ⲃ: ⲡⲱⲧⲓ “kill” (4V b15–6); ⲁⲓⲟⲩⲱⲱⲓ “he answered” (12V a11, a25; 17R b13); ⲓⲟⲩⲛⲉⲣⲟⲛ “bullwhip” (13R b9) ⲓⲁⲥⲁⲛⲟⲥ “punishment” (13V a26); ⲁⲓⲧⲉⲩⲣⲓⲧⲉ “you have shown contempt” (18R b25); ⲉⲧⲓⲩⲉⲧⲱⲃ ⲙⲙ “about everything” (19V b12)

ⲃ for ⲓ: ⲃⲟⲥⲓ “lunge at” (6V a25; 17R a17, a20); ⲁⲓⲧⲃⲱⲧⲉ “you sweated” (7V a31); ⲡⲃⲱ “the hair” (12V a31); ⲡⲉⲃⲁⲡⲉ “his head” (12V b30–31); ⲃⲓ ⲛⲧⲁⲡⲉ “decapitate” (15V a27–8; 18V a15); ⲃⲓⲧⲓ “lift him” (13V b3); ⲡⲟⲃ “snake”

⁹⁹ See Kuhn & Tait, *Thirteen Acrostic Hymns*, 12.

¹⁰⁰ See Part II below.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Depuydt, *Encomiastica* XVII sub. I.1d.

(16R b2); $\eta\epsilon\beta\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ “his angels” (16V b7); $\eta\alpha\eta\omicron\upsilon\beta$ “good” (16V b9); $\eta\varsigma\epsilon\omega\beta$ “and they press” (17V a4); $\gamma\omega\pi\beta$ “collapse” (17V b5); $\chi\eta\beta\epsilon$ “sword” (18V a16; 20R a15, b10); $\beta(\eta)\tau$ “worm” (18V a34); $\alpha\gamma\beta\iota$ “he lifted” (19R b17)

Devoicing (or rather expressing that a word still contains a plosive labial) as reflected in the variation $\beta\sim\pi$ occurs only with the word “iron”, which is systematically spelled $\pi\epsilon\mu\eta\pi\epsilon$. By contrast, the spreading of the feature [+VOICE] is attested in the writings $\eta\gamma\eta\alpha\omicron\upsilon\omega\omega\tau$ $\alpha\eta$ “you will not worship” (7R b21–2); $\eta\gamma\eta\alpha\theta\gamma\varsigma\iota\alpha\gamma\epsilon$ $\alpha\eta$ “you will not sacrifice” (7R b28–9), $\pi\epsilon\gamma\alpha\gamma\omicron\eta$ “your suffering” (15V a15), and $\eta\epsilon\beta\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ “your angels” (19V a19). The variation $\tau\sim\lambda$ is common in the writing of foreign words (see the next section below), but occurs also in native lexemes such as the preposition $\omicron\gamma\tau\epsilon$ - “among” ($\omicron\gamma\lambda\epsilon$ - 14R a14–5). The characteristically Hamulian confusion between $\omega\lambda\epsilon\eta\epsilon\gamma$ “forever” and $\eta\omega\lambda\epsilon\eta\epsilon\gamma$ “eternal” occurs also in the martyrdom of St Phoibamon (9V a1; 12R b22).¹⁰² A further dialectally inspired lexical use is the abbreviation $\overline{\omicron\varsigma}$ used of the word $\chi\omicron\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ “lord” (19V b24; 20V b29), which is again characteristic of Fayyumic-influenced Sahidic.

The most noteworthy graphemic feature of the text is the copyist’s un-failing use of a supralinear stroke for a line-final η . A similarly notable and characteristically Fayyumic habit is the doubling of syllable-initial η before vowels, nasals, and approximants. In some cases, the second η is appended with an extra $-\epsilon$ as $-\eta\epsilon$ -. The appearance of this feature is neither particularly common nor wholly systematic, but it is attested for the genitival/attributive morph (e.g. $\tau\alpha\pi\epsilon$ $\eta\eta$ - $\eta\eta\alpha\tau\gamma\upsilon\pi\omicron\varsigma$ 3V b22–3; $\pi\epsilon$ - $\gamma\pi\omicron\omicron\upsilon\gamma$ $\eta\eta\epsilon$ - $\eta\eta\epsilon\tau\gamma\alpha$ 5V a25–6; $\eta\omega\lambda$ $\eta\eta$ - $\eta\eta\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon$ 7R b14–5; $\theta\beta\varsigma\omega$ $\eta\eta$ - $\eta\eta\alpha\pi$ - $\theta\epsilon\eta\omicron\varsigma$ 15R b9–10), various η -ending prepositions (e.g. $\eta\eta\eta\epsilon$ - $\eta\eta\alpha\pi\epsilon\eta$ - $\beta\omicron\gamma\lambda\eta$ 1V a21–2; $\gamma\eta\eta$ - $\eta\eta\eta\gamma\epsilon$ 4R a28–9; $\epsilon\chi\epsilon\eta\eta$ - $\eta\eta\alpha\tau\gamma\upsilon\pi\omicron\varsigma$ 15R b4–5), and once also the suffix-pronoun $-\eta$ ($\eta\eta\alpha\tau\epsilon$ - $\eta\eta$ - $\omega\tau\pi$ $\eta\eta\omicron\gamma$ 7R a26–7). The regular writing of the word “kingdom” as $\eta\eta\tau\epsilon\pi(\rho)\omicron$ would seem to display the use of ϵ instead of the more standard supralinear stroke, and an analogous instance of η serving this purpose might also be cited ($\pi\omega\eta\pi\eta\mu\iota\varsigma\epsilon$ for $\pi\omega\pi\eta\mu\iota\varsigma\epsilon$, 19V a10). Conversely, sometimes the copyist dropped the unstressed $-\epsilon$ of the complementiser $\chi\epsilon$ ($\chi\eta\tau\omicron\gamma$ $\pi\epsilon$ $\pi\eta\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon$ “that he is God”, 14V a7; $\chi\eta\gamma\eta\alpha\lambda\gamma\eta\epsilon$ $\eta\eta\omicron\iota$ $\alpha\eta$ “that you will not disappoint me”, 19V a28–29). Other instances of dropping of vowels occur

¹⁰² Depuydt, *Encomiastica* XVII sub. I.3a.

often in the text, but these appear to be erroneous. One finds also a miscellaneous selection of apparently unsystematic replacements of vowels by others. These include cases of γ replacing ϵ ($\eta\epsilon\gamma\chi\eta\rho\alpha$ $\eta\eta\omicron\upsilon$ “and it was driven”, 12V b4; $\epsilon\alpha\gamma\gamma\text{-}\tau\eta\gamma\tau\eta$ “remove yourselves”, 19R a24, b12, but $\epsilon\alpha\gamma\epsilon\text{-}$ in 19V b6–7) and of η replacing final $-\iota\epsilon$ ($\eta\eta\tau\text{-}\epsilon\alpha\eta$ “beauty”, 18R b12). Syllable-initial $\epsilon\iota\text{-}$ is sometimes written merely as $\iota\text{-}$ ($\tau\alpha\rho\epsilon\kappa\iota\eta\epsilon$ “that I know”, 14V a6–7; $\omicron\gamma\iota\omega\tau$ “a father”, 19R b8). Replacement of consonants is rarer, but an instance of $\eta\epsilon\epsilon\omega\tau\omicron\upsilon$ for the Conjunctive $\eta\epsilon\epsilon\chi\tau\omicron\upsilon$ “and they laid him down” appears in 13R b6. Rather interesting is the writing $\zeta\omega\eta\tau$ instead of $\epsilon\omega\eta\tau$ “creation” in 9R b24. The writing $\eta\tau\omicron\tau\eta$ for the non-reduced form of the 2P absolute pronoun in two instances (18V b18; 19R a30–1) might reflect a loss of the distinction between the phonemes behind \omicron and ω – something probably also reflected in the variant writings $\tau\omicron\eta\omicron\upsilon$ (20V a29–30) and $\tau\omega\eta\omicron\upsilon$ (20V a1) for the adverb “very, greatly, certainly”. There are two instances of ϵ replacing final \omicron and medial ω ($\tau\alpha\lambda\epsilon$ “ascend” 18V b3; $\omicron\gamma\epsilon\omega$ “gap, cleft” 14V b34–5). The first of these cases may represent an exceptional use of the *status nominalis* form of the infinitive instead of the correct *status absolutus*, reported in Fayyumic-influenced texts and found also in the other texts edited in this volume.

Words of Foreign Origin

Broadly speaking, the copyist’s handling of foreign (i.e. Greek and in one or two instances Latin) words may be deemed reasonably adept, and no extensive remarks are needed here. “Incorrect” writings are usually explicable by differences in Greek and Coptic phoneme systems, although variant spellings of the same word are commonly attested throughout the text.

With consonants, the most obvious feature resulting in vacillation in spelling is the relative disregard of the feature $[\pm\text{VOICE}]$. This is reflected in both alveolar and velar positions either as the use of an unvoiced stop for an original voiced sound or vice versa. The former option is much more common in alveolar (e.g. $\tau\eta\eta\eta\tau\eta\rho$ 7V a14 for Δημήτηρ; $\tau\iota\kappa\alpha\sigma\tau\eta\rho\text{-}\omicron\eta$ 18R b26 for δικαστήριον; $\tau\alpha\iota\eta\omega\eta$ 16V b15 for δαίμων; $\tau\omicron\kappa\iota\eta\alpha\zeta\epsilon$ 16R b24–5 for δοκιμάζειν) than velar positions ($\alpha\kappa\omega\eta$ 20V b10 for ἄγων; $\epsilon\gamma\eta\kappa\omicron\lambda\lambda\alpha\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ 1V a12–3 and often for σιγγουλάριος, Lat. *singularius*).