A New Piece in the Prosopography Mosaic of the Coptic Scriptorium of Toutōn: Pantouleos, Son of Houmise *

Agostino Soldati, Sapienza University of Rome

Summary

A photograph taken in the early 1930s during a swift reconnaissance of the Byzantine sector of Tebtynis (Coptic Toutōn) is the only witness of a now lost dipinto mentioning a Pantouleos son of Houmise. The man could be the homonymous donor mentioned in the colophon (939/940 CE) of a fragmentary manuscript written in Toutōn and preserved in Viennese Papyrussammlung, as well as, perhaps, the owner of a refined shawl kept in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

While the documentary and archaeological evidence is almost totally lacking or still unpublished as yet, a consistent number of literary paratexts attest to the thriving of a sizeable scriptorium in Toutōn (Fayyūm) from the ninth to the eleventh century.¹ The oldest extant colophon (Cairo, Coptic Museum, Ham. H 47556 = Depuydt 1993, no. 404, f. 49v = van Lantschoot 1929, no. XII) bears the date of 861/862 (l. 28–30: περιγονος | ημεραργυρος | φων, ‘(in) the time of the Martyrs, 578’), whereas the latest instance of a scribal activity in the village is the long-winded Fayyūmic note preserved in a Bohairic miscellaneous manuscript (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Copt. 68, f. 162v.).² The note, written in a calligraphic hand that could hardly belong to any context other than a scriptorium, also provides a precious clue concerning the main reason of decline of that renowned Coptic cultural centre. Its author, a certain Joseph (ll. 11–13: πελαγχιστος ιασ · ιωσιφ · πυμην | ημερακριος · παπακστολος | ιγιοτιων | νικαβα), took refuge in the Scete monastery, having fled from his native region ‘in the time that the churches and the monasteries of the Fayyūm were devastated, (reigning) the son of Isaas, which is called Palhachēm’ (ll. 15–18: εις πικερος παλ ·

* This study was carried out within the framework of the ERC Advanced Grant (2015) ‘PATHs – Tracking Papyrus and Parchment Paths: An Archaeological Atlas of Coptic Literature: Literary Texts in their Geographical Context: Production, Copying, Usage, Dissemination and Storage’, directed by Paola Buzi and hosted by Sapienza University of Rome (grant no. 687567).

1 About Tebtynis during the Islamic period see Björnesjö 1993; a comprehensive sketch of the Coptic scriptorium there hosted is provided by Depuydt 1993, CXII–XVI. About the recent excavations of the Byzantine sector see Gallazzi 2010.

2 First edited in Quatremère 1808, 243–256, then newly transcribed by Hebbelynck and van Lantschoot 1937, 510–511. A facsimile of the leaf is available in Hyvernat 1888, XV.

COMSt Bulletin 3/1 (2017)
NTAWCEHEREN 3 NIEKH|CIA · ARX MONEASTHRION · IOTE PIAH · ETE PORME | NIUSAC PE · PETOYNOYGO EYPH PE · CE PALKAXHNI PE), that is during the persecutions against Christians by the sixth Fāṭimid caliph, Al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh (375 AH/985 CE–411 AH/1021 CE). The note also recalls the earthquake (ll. 26–27: PAK · KIM · Hlampen tai ω naixte · gen ou|nos ukim ekw mnon · ethete) which hit Fayyūm in the summer of 1014 CE (ll. 28–29: ncy/Ke/IN neopri · tawri pe n/ou|ouow en thep /iamo Hlampen ni// AIOK(AINTL)OC).

With the usual subtlety, Leo Depuydt highlighted the undeniable stylistic affinity between the illuminations on the frontispieces of some manuscripts from Toutōn and the (now lost) paintings photographed during the episodic explorations of the Byzantine sector of Tebtynis by Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt in 1899/1900, and by Carlo Anti and Gilberto Bagnani during the 1930s.4 It seems plausible that the scriptorium was located in the vicinity of the ecclesiastical buildings adorned by those paintings, usually dated to the ninth century. The dating is supported by the previously mentioned dated manuscripts with similar drawings and by some Coptic and Arabic epigraphic evidence on the walls of the now destroyed decorated spaces. Among the inscriptions transcribed by Grenfell and Hunt in the so-called ‘Crum Notebook 67’, that of Papas son of Markouri stands out for its dating to 953 and for its formulary, close to the phrasing we find in the contemporary colophons written by copyists from Toutōn.5 Only thirteen years earlier, the scribe named

3 Quatremère 1808, 249–250, n. 1, refraining from its translation, admits ‘J’ignore absolument ce que veut dire Σηφρέν. Peut-être ce mot est-il corrompu. Je laisse à de plus savans que moi le soin de corriger ou d’expliquer ce passage. M. de Sacy pense qu’il faut lire φερέν, qu’il doit correspondre au verbe Memphitique χεφrhon ou χεφρέν, confringere’. Hebbelyncck and van Lantschoot 1937, 511, reasonably, though doubtfully, render ‘in tempore illo quo ecclesiae, immo monasteria diruta (?) sunt’. An equally hesitant interpretation ‘? devastation’ is provided by Crum 1939, 342a, whilst Jaroslav Černý abstains from any explanation. Although the comparison with the Boḥairic ϋόβρη, Fayyūmic ϋόβρη, may sound fascinating, I wonder if such hapax could not be compared with the ancient škmkm ‘ein Land radikal verwüsten’, whose Sa’īdic outcome is skknh, reduplicated form of škm, surviving in Sa’īdic sknh / oshn, Boḥairic knh, see Westendorf 2008, 182, cp. also Vychichl 1983, 187a. Perhaps in the writing attested by the Vatican manuscript one could see an aberrant notation (showing reduction cv > c; ρ pro x, cp. at least Kahle 1954, 128, § 108 (c < cv); 143–144, §123c (x < ρ)) of the usual ‘Wechsel von erfolgter und unterbliebener Aspiration vor betontem bzw. unbetontem V okal’ affecting reduplicated roots, cp. Steindorff 1951, 28.

4 On the exploration of the Byzantine and Islamic sector of Tebtynis, see at least Boutros 2005, with further literature.

5 On the precious contents of the notebook, see Walters 1989; the inscription is published here, 205: ‘πος τε πες χο θυ ράρες εποιήνης πάπας γ γραφερ | ξεπαθη καιπηροκιονα γκαρκατηγελος γινεςες ην ου ράκας | ερπαδος τε

COMSt Bulletin 3/1 (2017)
Matthew copied the Coptic translation of a homily *In Michaelem archangelum*, attributed to John Chrysostom, in a codex of which only two leaves have survived (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Papyrussammlung, K 351 and K 9670). Recently Enzo Lucchesi could attribute both leaves to the same manuscript and identify their content thanks to the Arabic version of that pseudo-Chrysostomic work. 6 K 351 bears the *explicit* of the homily and a customarily verbose colophon, quite famous for having been partially reproduced in a plate of Walter Till’s *Koptische Grammatik*: 7

\[
\text{The lord Jesus Christ, our true (αληθινός) God bless our God-lover brother, charity (ἀγάπη)-lover and Eucharistic offering (προσφορά)-lover Pantōleos [ ] son of Hou-misi, the dyer, the cantor (ψαλμῳδός), that of Talit in the nome of Piom, because he took care of this book at his own expenses, he handed it to the church (ἐκκλησία) of the prophet (προφήτης) Apa Šenoute of the monastery (lit. mountain) of Atrēpe in the nome of Šmim for the release of his soul (ψυχή), in order that God may bless him with every blessing spiritual (πνευματικός) and heavenly (ἐπουράνιος) and every property belonging to him, and, also, as he will leave the body (σῶμα), may...}
\]


7. The photograph is available in Till 1961, the plate between pp. 254 and 255. Its first concise description, due to Jakob Krall, appeared in the lavish *Führer* 1894, 43, nr. 110; after the diplomatic transcription offered by Wessely 1914, 6, no. 195b, the text was edited by Van Lantschoot 1929, 87–88, no. LIV.
the holy prophet Šenoute with the holy archangel (ἀρχάγγελος) Gabriel intercede
(παρακαλέων) with the king Christ on his behalf, so that He may forgive all his sins,
which he committed, and enroll his name in the book of life, enumerate him in the
number of all his saints, give him a hundredfold requital of his vow in the heavenly
Jerusalem, the abode (πόλις) of all righteous (δίκαιος), amen, (so) be it. According
to the time of the Holy Martyrs, (year) 656. It was gracefully copied8 by me, the
humblest deacon Matheos, from the village of Toutōn in Piom.9

The transcription of the text provided by Carl Wessely as well as the accurate
re-edition by Arnold van Lantschoot suggest that the fragment must have been in
a much better state of preservation in the early decades of the twentieth
century than it is now. Today, the final portion of the first dozen of lines of the
colophon is almost entirely missing, and the area of the lacuna hosts illegiti-
mately a detached scrap clearly not pertaining to the leaf. Thus, we have no
choice but to rely on Wessely’s readings.

The name of the donor is transcribed as πανταλέος (II. 5–6), an ab-
errant writing which led Stefan Timm to see the name Anatolios in it. Actu-
ally, παν{αν}|ταλέος has to be interpreted as a Verschreibung, through a
common dittography caused by the imminence of the diremptio vocis, of the
quite common πανταλέος.9 This personal name occurs sporadically in me-

8 The frequent aberrant Greek verbal form (κε)καλιωγράψατε—see the instanc-
es collected by van Lantschoot 1929, II, 123b, cp. also Förster 2002, 369, s.v.
καλλιγράφος—is quite oddly interpreted by the Belgian scholar as a misspelling
of the futurum exactum κεκαλλιγράφεται improperly employed; I would rather be
inclined to explain the form as a passive perfect κεκαλλιγράφηται with an inap-
propriate aoristic sigmatic infix. Conversely, erroneous redoubling of non-perfec-
tive forms are not unknown to the Greek of documentary papyri since the Roman
period, cp. hybridizations as γεγευσαμένους (P.Oxy. 2990, 6–7; third century ce),
sυμπεφωνηθεῖσα (P.Abinn. 60, 10; 346 ce), further instances in Mandilaras 1973,
202, § 423, and Gignac 1981, 243b. The writing is noteworthy from the phonetic
point of view for the ω inserted between the two members of the compound: this
is not a Coptic mangling—cp. the concurrent correct καλιού̣τερον in the same text,
von Lantschoot 1929, no. LXXXVI—but rather a reflection of a peculiarity of the
late Greek. Already the fourth- or fifth-century papyrus BGU III 948, 8 offers the
comparative καλιού̣τερον, a hybrid outcome of the concoction between the classical
comparative καλίων and the post-classical καλίτερος, still attested in many modern
Greek dialects.

9 Pantaleon is the name of the widely worshipped martyr of Nicomedia, whose pas-
sio is also preserved in a fragmentary Coptic version (CC 0293); more generally
see Pisani 2015. The Alexandrine Synaxarium commemorates him on 15 Bābah
(12 October): the tradition oscillates between the variants بيدلايمون and بنتلاون,
stoutly printed by René Basset بنتلاون (Basset 1907, 339 [125]). Such unsteadiness in
the form of the name could hint to the presence, at an earlier stage of the textual tra-
dition, of the detail of the miraculous onomastic change from Pantaleon to Pan-
teleemon recounted by the Byzantine Sinaxarium. Another Arabic outcome of the
dieval Fayyūm, as evidenced by Fayyūmic Coptic epigraphy. The following word in the colophon is quite damaged; Wessely transcribed it as [...] (l. 6) and van Lantschoot partially completed with Π[...] (l. 6). The beginning would match such names as the Arabic خلوق or the Greek χλων/ χλων. Van Lantschoot interpreted the next word as the name of the ancestor, هميسة, associated with the apposition نطقχτ (ll. 7–8), a Berufsname corresponding to the Greek βαφεύς. It is worth noting that the same word is juxtaposed to the name of the donor mentioned in a contemporary colophon in MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, copt. 131, f. 39v (copied by the same scribe). I wonder if the word relics following Π[...] may be ascribable to his sobriquet, rather than belong to the patronymic of the donor, as van Lantschoot supposed. The note relating to the donor ends with the mention of his ecclesiastical task (l. 8: πατάλειτ χαντράοφ | ποощ), and his native village (ll. 9–10: παταυλη χάντραοφ | ροην). The manuscript was offered to the monastery of Apa Shenoute in Atripe, near Sūhāǧ. The final Greek subscriptio gives us the date of the copying, the year 656 of the Era of the Martyrs (939/940 ce), and the identity of the scribe, the deacon Matthew from Toutōn.

The main interest of the colophon resides in the mention of the donor Παντόλεος, son, if not nephew (as van Lantschoot inferred), of Ηουμφίς. The note could not have been the sole attestation of the cantor from Talit. A lavish shawl, fragmentarily preserved at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and dated by Annemarie Stauffer to around the eighth or ninth century, is decorated alongside both fringes by a Coptic writing dwarfed by an Arabic one in floriated Kūfic script:

\[\text{ποε ηεε πεναλχοεο ενογι σνσ αυι χαιο χαι οαρ εποιαν ηενπεριαλ παντουλεος π?ροηο?\]  

name could be seen in the بنترس of P.Cair.Arab. I 43, 5, traced back by the editor to the Greek Παντελῆς. The vocalism /o/ shown by the Coptic rendering πανταλεος / παντουλεος could directly reflect the ‘Asiatic’ vocalism of the Ancient Greek variant Παντελέων.

For the occurrences of the name in Fayyūmic milieux see Boud’hors and Calament 2004, 475.


The word, literally meaning ‘dies natalis’, is attested as personal name in some Coptic (cp. Hasitzka 2007, 117a) as well as Arabic (همسة, cp. ad P.Cair.Arab. I 70, 5) documents from Fayyūm. On closer inspection, in such texts the mention of the ancestor is quite poorly attested.

Van Lantschoot 1929, II, 38, wonders unnecessarily if the name might correspond to سحیر، ‘rope-maker’, whilst Amélineau 1893, 528, more plausibly preferred to see it as a simple nickname.

Stauffer 1995, 42.

The text is quoted as it has been published in Boud’hors and Calament 2004, 468.
Connecting the embroidering with the colophon of K 351, Boud’hors and Calament cagily supposed its provenance from Toutōn. I am convinced that the uncertain second letter of the patronymic of Pantouleōs can be read as an inaccurately rendered ϣ. Thus, the patronymic could be interpreted as πυ(ΜΗ)ΡΟΓΗΜΙΩ.

A further plausible mention of the same individual could be traced down in a still unpublished dipinto, sketched on a crumbling wall of Byzantine Toutōn (fig. 1). The wall has since collapsed, and its only extant testimony is a photograph taken between 1930 and 1933 (during the excavations of the archaeological mission of the University of Padua), now kept in the archive of the Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, depository of Mestre (still without inventory number). It is not possible to ascertain if the wall belonged to one of the three ecclesiastical complexes conjectured by Peter Grossmann.16 The uninterrupted lootings in the abandoned site from the mid-1930s up to the end of the 1980s resulted in a thorough devastation of the Byzantine buildings cursorily explored by the British and Italian missions. However, some palaeographical features, as well as the terse hints given by Gilberto Bagnani about the dating of the archaeological context of what he supposed could have been an ample monastic complex, allow us to locate the inscription in the same period as the Viennese colophon. As one can see, the dipinto understandably exhibits a more pronounced Fayyūmic timbre:

`ⲁⲛⲕ ⲡⲁⲧⲟⲩⲓ ⲡϣⲏⲛⲡⲇⲓ(ⲁ)ⲕ(ⲧⲟⲩⲓ) ⲩⲟⲩⲓⲥⲓ ⲩⲡⲉⲡ ⲥⲉⲢⲡ ϩⲙⲡⲣⲁⲩ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⣭ⲡⲓ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲩⲡⲉⲡ

With all the caution such identifications require, the correspondence is decisively striking. The devotee donor of the book copied by the deacon Matthew, the owner of the soigné shawl kept in Metropolitan Museum, and the man who had the dipinto drawn could be one and the same person.17 Par-

16 Grossmann 2005.
17 Ad abundantiam, we cannot but mention the Δⲧⲧⲧ(ⲧⲟⲩⲓ) ρⲟⲩⲓⲏⲥ (l. 9) attested as a witness (ⲡⲁⲧⲓⲣⲉ) in the sale deed of two monastic cells (ll. 2–3: ⲁⲧⲡⲧⲉⲡ | ⲡⲧⲣⲩⲧⲉ) preserved in a parchment kept at the British Museum, re-edited by Richter 1999, 85–89 (= KSB III 1413). Nevertheless, the document, whose language shows a distinct Fayyūmic colour, is dated ‘ⲧⲕⲧⲡ υⲣⲟⲩⲓ ⢃ⲱ’ (l. 12) of the Era of the Martyrs, namely the 986/987 ce, more than forty years after the Viennese colophon. It is thus hardly plausible that this witness was the father of the donor Pantouleos.
particularly the combination of the colophon with the *dipinto* could represent a paradigmatic case of dovetailing of information provided by written sources into the archaeological context which quite plausibly was the very scene of their copying. A thorough study of the sizable photographic documentation acquired during the albeit desultory reconnaissance of the Byzantine and Islamic quarter of the ancient Tebtynis, scattered in various European and Canadian institutions, could yield an edition of the now lost Coptic and Arabic inscriptions, which, alongside the paintings, possibly adorned the very walls of the renowned *scriptorium* of Toutōn.

**References**

Greek and Coptic papyri are cited according to the *Checklist of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets*, <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/clist.html>; Arabic papyri according to the *Checklist of Arabic Documents*, <http://www.naher-osten.lmu.de/isapchecklist>.


