

# Articles and notes

## Some Observations on the Coptic Reception of the Shepherd

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### Summary

The *Shepherd of Hermas*, an early Christian apocalyptic book written in Greek in Rome of the second century, has been translated in both Akhmimic and Sahidic Coptic. This contribution revisits the surviving manuscripts of the *Shepherd* and discusses two issues concerning its Coptic reception which seemed settled: the dating of the earliest manuscript and the question of a split transmission of its text, with the first four Visions separated from the rest of the book.

The *Shepherd of Hermas* is one of the best represented early Christian writings among the Greek papyri: with 23 surviving Greek continuous-text papyri,<sup>1</sup> it is comparable in this respect only with the Gospels of Matthew and John, with 24 and 30 extant papyri respectively, in a context in which seventeen other New Testament books each occur in less than five papyri. It also appears copied at the end of the so-called Codex Sinaiticus, together with the *Epistle of Barnabas*, after the books of the Old and New Testament. The *Shepherd* was translated into Latin (two different translations, one from the second or third century), Coptic, Ethiopic, Middle Persian, and Georgian. However, while the Greek, the oldest Latin, and the Ethiopic strands of reception have benefited from recent thorough scholarly treatments,<sup>2</sup> the Coptic is somewhat lagging behind. A fresh assessment of this strand of reception would be timely and important in order to get a comprehensive view on the reception of the *Shepherd* in late antique Egypt. To that end, this contribution discusses two elements potentially relevant for a possible reception history of the *Shepherd of Hermas* in Coptic: the dating of the earliest manuscript and the question of a split

- 1 Count in Gonis 2005, 1. For the list see Batovici 2016a, 394–395. Apart from these there are also P. Oxy 1.5 (LDAB 2607) and P. Mich. inv. 6427 (LDAB 5694), and—rarely mentioned in this respect—the Deir-Bala<sup>2</sup>izah Papyrus which contain quotations from the Shepherd embedded in other texts. For a comparison with other early Christian papyri see Choat and Yuen-Collingridge 2010, 196–197.
- 2 E.g. Tornau and Ceconi 2014; Erho 2015 and various other publications of this author; and the yet unpublished PhD thesis presented in Villa 2015. There are a number of recent publications on the various aspects of the Greek reception of the *Shepherd* as well, e.g. Batovici 2014, 2015, 2016a, 2016b.

transmission of its text (the first four Visions on the one hand, and the rest of the book on the other).

A first observation would be that, compared to Greek or Latin, a peculiarity of the Coptic reception of the *Shepherd* is that virtually all the evidence we have is the few surviving manuscripts, as the Coptic text of the *Shepherd* is only known from three highly fragmentary manuscripts.<sup>3</sup> One of them—the Akhmimic papyrus—is currently hosted in Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve; a parchment manuscript was also hosted in Leuven but was lost to the fire that burned the university library down on 17 May 1940. The third, dismembered, consists of fragments held in Paris (most of them) and Cairo. We will start therefore by offering an updated list of the manuscripts, which is necessary given that several fragments are now in different institutions than they were at the time of the latest publication, and will discuss a number of elements of scribal behaviour, potentially relevant for a historical enquiry focused on manuscripts taken as reception artefacts. The paper will conclude with some considerations on the possibility that the Akhmimic papyrus leaves were at some point part of a pandect similar to Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Alexandrinus (i.e. containing OT and NT books, followed by Apostolic Fathers).

## 1. *The Witnesses*

### a. *The Akhmimic Codex and its Date* | LDAB 107965

Inventory: Archives Louvain-La-Neuve, Fond Lefort 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

KU Leuven, University Library Lefort 3 a, b, c (ff. 4, 6, 7)

Contents: *Mandate* 4.3.5–5.1.4 & *Similitude* 9.1.4–9.12.5

First published by L.-Th. Lefort in 1952, it preserves text from the fourth and fifth *Mandates* and of the ninth *Similitude*.<sup>4</sup> There are eight fragmentary leaves, which Lefort estimates to have originally measured 12–13 × 27 cm,<sup>5</sup> with a column of text of 8.5–10 × 21 cm, bearing ‘très probablement 34 lignes’, with 20 to 22 letters per line,<sup>6</sup> though some variation in the number of lines per page should most likely be allowed. There is no surviving page or leaf numbering, though margins have survived, top and bottom margins measuring 2.5–3 cm, left and right of about 2 cm. Given that the fibre succession is ↓ → for the first six leaves and → ↓ for the last two, Lefort proposes this

3 A fourth manuscript, consisting of two papyrus fragments, has recently emerged from the Oxyrhynchus papyri finds—66 6B.29–E(1–2)a—and is being currently edited by Geoffrey Smith.

4 Lefort 1952, ii–iv. At i, n. 3, Lefort notes that ‘ce lot nous fut offert par M. Jean Dorese qui l’avait acquis au Caire chez l’antiquaire Albert Eid’.

5 This would place the codex in ‘Group 8’, as categorised in Turner 1977, 20.

6 Lefort 1952, ii.

to have been a single gathering codex—of course, assuming it was a regular one in this respect. Since the eight leaves are now split between Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve, the following table presents them by content and current inventory number for future reference:

Folio	Content	Inventory
1	Mand. 4.3.5—5.1.4	Fond Lefort 1, Archives Louvain-la-Neuve
2	Sim. 9.1.4—9.2.2	Fond Lefort 2, Archives Louvain-la-Neuve
3	Sim. 9.2.3—9.3.3	Fond Lefort 3, Archives Louvain-la-Neuve
4	Sim. 9.3.3—9.4.6	University Library Lefort 3 a, Leuven
5	Sim. 9.4.6—9.5.5	Fond Lefort 4, Archives Louvain-la-Neuve
6	Sim. 9.6.6—9.7.6	University Library Lefort 3 b, Leuven
7	Sim. 9.9.4—9.10.6	University Library Lefort 3 c, Leuven
8	Sim. 9.11.8—9.12.5	Fond Lefort 5, Archives Louvain-la-Neuve

We now turn to the question of dating. Lefort dates the writing to the fourth century, yet the only reason put forward in his edition of the manuscript in support of the proposed date is the elongated shape of the column, resembling that of a column in a papyrus roll, which Lefort interprets as a reflexion of the transition from roll format to codex format.<sup>7</sup> In a previous publication, containing an edition of the Akhmimic fragments of the Gospel of Luke, which came to Lefort along with the fragments of the *Shepherd* and further Akhmimic fragments of Genesis, and which he deems to have been written by the same hand, the date offered is fourth/fifth century, with no further argument.<sup>8</sup> It is only in the subsequent edition of the Genesis fragments, published in 1953, that the dating is related explicitly to the script—in addition to the format: ‘L’écriture, en belle onciale dite biblique, nous reporte, du reste, à cette période, puisqu’elle ne paraît pas devoir être fixée à un<sup>e</sup> date postérieure au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle’.<sup>9</sup>

The dating of Coptic manuscripts being notoriously problematic,<sup>10</sup> it is worth reconsidering the degree of certainty of this dating. The script is indeed a biblical majuscule:<sup>11</sup> most letters tend to be geometrical, with alternating thick and thin strokes, the vertical ones being the thickest and the horizontal

7 Lefort 1952, ii.

8 Lefort 1949, 200.

9 Lefort 1953, 3. Norsa 1939, 22–23, adding that ‘quels que soient les préjugés des papyrologues, on ne peut nier que grec et copte sortaient du calame des mêmes scribes, et partant que les deux paléographies sont communes à cette époque’, at 3, n. 5.

10 Layton 1985.

11 Orsini 2008.

the thinnest, whereas the oblique ones can move from thicker to thinner.  $\Delta$  is written in three strokes,  $\kappa$  in three (and the two oblique ones can be detached from the vertical one),  $\mu$  in four.  $\Phi$  and  $\Psi$  break the bilinearism at the top and at the bottom,  $\rho$ ,  $\gamma$  and  $\eta$  only at the bottom (though the latter tends to be shorter than the former two), whereas  $\sigma$  can vary occasionally in size, and its smaller version can be written above the baseline. The thinner strokes of  $\tau$ ,  $\epsilon$ ,  $\kappa$ ,  $\zeta$ ,  $\xi$ ,  $\chi$  have small thicker ornamental endings, whereas the oblique stroke of  $\mu$  can be slightly curved.

Pasquale Orsini, who made an attempt to pin down more precisely a timeline for the development of the Coptic biblical majuscule, places such features in a second phase of the script, set at the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth,<sup>12</sup> which opens the possibility that the dating of the codex should include at least the first part of the latter century. Other complementary factors also suggest that a more cautious and inclusive dating is preferable. While the use of Akhmimic might be in favour of the earlier dating, it is still compatible with a dating in the fifth century, when the dialect was still used.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, whereas most of the codices in Turner's 'group 8' are dated to the fourth century, there are also two that allow a dating in the fifth century as well.<sup>14</sup> In any event, these considerations are not meant to produce a new dating for the Akhmimic papyrus codex of the *Shepherd of Hermas*—only to serve as a reminder that the traditional dating should not be taken as a well-established fact, but one which will have to be re-evaluated with each future advancement of the discipline of Coptic palaeography.

With regard to scribal behaviour, a number of elements can be highlighted here. The *Shepherd* leaves of the codex contain one subtitle, on f. 1v, that of the Fifth Mandate,  $\tau\mu\lambda\epsilon\tau\ \bar{\nu}\epsilon\bar{\nu}\tau\sigma\lambda[\eta$ , placed alone in the fourth line, probably aligned to its centre. On the previous line there is the ending of the Fourth Mandate, and its last word is followed by a high dot (and an oblique ascending line, similar to  $\bullet/\$ , but is not clear whether the dash is in the same ink) and blank space until the end of line. Several other high dots separate sentences, with no extra space before or after, e.g. in l. 8 and 23 of f. 1v; l. 3 of f. 2v; l. 27 and 29 of f. 3v; l. 6 of f. 4r; l. 3 of f. 4v; last line of f. 5v; l. 2 of f. 6v; the seventh line from bottom on f. 7v. Sentences can also be separated by a character-size blank space, as in the fourth line of f. 2r; l. 25 of f. 4v; l. 11 of f. 5v; l. 3 of f. 6r. Most of these appear in Lefort's edition as high dots.

Finally, the left margin of the text is kept carefully, each line's first letter being aligned to its left, not to its vertical stroke. Yet there seems to be no spe-

12 Orsini 2008, 131–132.

13 Nagel 1991, 19.

14 Turner 1977, 20.

cial effort to keep the right margin as neat as the left, as there are occasionally up to three character blank spaces at the end of line, separating words in the same sentence. On *l.* 8 of *f.* 2v, however, a blank space of about six characters in size seems to signal the end of a sentence, with the following sentence starting at the beginning of the next line. However, occasionally letters are written considerably smaller than usual above the baseline at the end of line, seemingly in order to finish a word on the same line, as the letter sequence  $\text{BOYO}$  in *l.* 29 of *f.* 6v, and  $\text{OK}$  in the fourth line counted from last of *f.* 7r.

*b. The White Monastery Codex MONB.AM | LDAB 108123*

Inventory: Paris, BnF 130<sup>2</sup> *f.* 114, 127; 130<sup>5</sup> *f.* 120, 129–130; 131<sup>5</sup> *f.* 69;  
131<sup>7</sup> *f.* 61; 132<sup>1</sup> ff. 33–34, 45; 132<sup>3</sup> *f.* 256; 133<sup>1</sup> ff. 5a, 7–7d

Paris, Louvre 9997

Cairo, IFAO number unknown

Contents: *Mandate* 8.7–8.12; 12.3.4–12.4.5 & *Similitude* 9.2.3–9.6.1

These are fragments of 14 leaves that belonged once to the same parchment codex, measuring 14 × 19 cm, listed as MONB.AM in *Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari*. Similar to many other manuscripts originating from the White Monastery, the codex is dismembered now and its parts are hosted in three different institutions. The updated version of Lefort's synopsis of the fragments below<sup>15</sup> presents them according to the sections of the *Shepherd* that they preserve, grouped together when they belong to the same leaf, and noting the Coptic pagination where available.

Content	Numbering	Fragment
Mand. 8.7–8.12	$\overline{\lambda\zeta} - [\overline{\lambda\zeta}]$	BnF Copte 130 <sup>2</sup> , <i>f.</i> 114. <sup>16</sup>
Mand. 12.3.4–4.5	$\overline{\eta\zeta} - \overline{\eta\zeta}$	BnF Copte 130 <sup>5</sup> <i>f.</i> 129, <sup>17</sup> Cairo IFAO (no number).
Sim. 2.3–2.7	$\overline{\xi\zeta} - \overline{\xi\zeta}$	BnF Copte 131 <sup>5</sup> <i>f.</i> 69.
Sim. 2.7–3.3	$\overline{\xi\eta} - \overline{\xi\theta}$	BnF Copte 130 <sup>5</sup> <i>f.</i> 120. <sup>18</sup>
Sim. 4.8–5.2.2	$\overline{\theta\beta} - [\overline{\theta\gamma}]$	Louvre 9997. <sup>19</sup>
Sim. 5.3.7–5.4.1	$[\overline{\theta\eta} - \overline{\theta\theta}]$	BnF Copte 131 <sup>7</sup> <i>f.</i> 61.
Sim. 6.1.4–6.1.6	$[\overline{\pi\zeta} - \overline{\pi\zeta}]$	BnF Copte 133 <sup>1</sup> <i>f.</i> 7a.
Sim. 6.2.1–6.2.7	$\overline{\pi\eta} - \overline{\pi\theta}$	BnF Copte 132 <sup>1</sup> <i>f.</i> 33. <sup>20</sup>

15 Lefort 1952, v–vi.

16 First edited in Lucchesi 1981, 400–404. For the rest of the fragments, the most recent editions are Lefort 1938 and Lefort 1952, 19–31. Earlier editions will be mentioned in footnotes.

17 First edited in Leipoldt 1903, then in Delaporte 1906b; see also Delaporte 1906a.

18 First edited in Leipoldt 1903, then in Delaporte 1905.

19 First edited in Delaporte 1905.

20 First edited in Delaporte 1906b.

Sim. 8.10.3–8.11.5	$\overline{\rho\theta} - \overline{\rho\kappa}$	BnF Copte 132 <sup>1</sup> f. 34. <sup>21</sup>
Sim. 9.2.7–9.4.2	$[\overline{\rho\kappa\epsilon} - \overline{\rho\kappa\varsigma}]$	BnF Copte 130 <sup>2</sup> f. 127. <sup>22</sup>
Sim. 9.4.3–9.4.6	$[\overline{\rho}] \overline{\kappa\zeta} - [\overline{\rho\kappa\eta}]$	BnF Copte 133 <sup>1</sup> f. 7.
Sim. 9.5.1–9.6.1	$[\overline{\rho\kappa\theta} - \overline{\rho\lambda}]$	BnF Copte 133 <sup>1</sup> f. 7d. <sup>23</sup> BnF Copte 132 <sup>1</sup> f. 45, BnF Copte 130 <sup>5</sup> f. 130. <sup>24</sup>
Sim. 9.11.7–9.12.5	$[\overline{\rho\eta\gamma} - \overline{\rho\eta\lambda}]$	BnF Copte 132 <sup>3</sup> f. 256, BnF Copte 133 <sup>1</sup> ff. 5a, 7c.
Sim. 9.13.5–9.13.7	$[\overline{\rho\eta\zeta} - \overline{\rho\eta\eta}]$	BnF Copte 133 <sup>1</sup> f. 7b.

The question of dating seems somewhat similar. Neither Leipoldt nor Delaporte seem to make an attempt to date the fragments they published. Lefort, for his part, dates it to the sixth/seventh century,<sup>25</sup> and Lucchesi seems to concur.<sup>26</sup> The entry in the *Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari* similarly dates MONB.AM to the sixth/seventh century. It is nonetheless worth noting that the way in which Lefort dates the manuscript is to offer as comparandum Bodleian Library MS Clarendon Press 57 (LDAB 108141), which is also a manuscript he edited and consequently dated,<sup>27</sup> a fact which points to a certain circularity involved in the dating process. The matter is complicated, as mentioned, with the difficulties of dating Coptic manuscripts before the ninth century, when dated colophons appear.<sup>28</sup> Together with the Akhmimic codex presented above, this serves as a reminder that we do not have a clear, secure dating for such manuscripts.

With regard to scribal behaviour, in MONB.AM there are five extant subtitles—one on each side of BnF Copte 130<sup>5</sup> f. 120, one on each side of Louvre 9997, and one on the hair side of BnF Copte 132<sup>1</sup> f. 34. The first column of the hair side of Louvre 9997 has the subtitle of the sixth *Similitude* (παράβολη: ς) alone in the column, the lines above and below filled with a row of horizontal strokes separated by *diplae*. The same goes for the title of the next *Similitude* (παράβολη: ζ) on second column of the flesh side of Louvre 9997. The first letter of the *Similitudes* (following each title) is enlarged and protrudes into the margin in *ekthesis*, and in the second case, where the margin has survived,

21 First edited in Delaporte 1906b.

22 First edited in Leipoldt 1909–1910. In the case of this fragment, the editio princeps is still relevant because Leipoldt offers a text which is free of the omission that crept into Lefort's edition; on this, see Batovici 2017.

23 First edited in Leipoldt 1903, then in Delaporte 1906b.

24 First edited in Leipoldt 1903.

25 Lefort 1938, v.

26 Lucchesi 1981, 401.

27 Lefort 1965.

28 Van Lantschoot 1929.

it also features a curved ornament with a leaf-like figure on top.

The two subtitles on BnF Copte 130<sup>s</sup> f. 120 (see fig. 1) occur on the last line of the second column (παρβολη: Δ and παρβολη: ε). They are similarly adorned with rows of horizontal strokes and *diploae* above and below, and also have ornamental shapes, and this

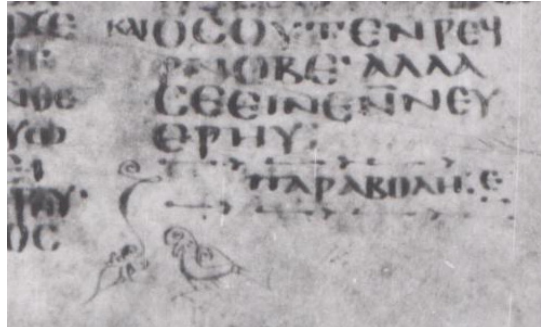


Fig. 1. The title of the Fifth Similitude in MS Paris, BnF Copte 130<sup>s</sup>, f. 120v.

time a bird drawing each, around their left margins. The title on the hair side of BnF Copte 132<sup>1</sup> f. 34 is that of the ninth *Similitude*, of which only the word ἀρχη survives (alone in the line, with blank space to its left and right), as the leaf breaks immediately under it. However, it has a row of curved lines and *diploae* above. And if in the other four cases the space after the last words of the previous section is left blank, in the case of this subtitle the rest of the line is filled with *diploae*.

When Δ and X are at the beginning of a line, their horizontal stroke projects into the left margin for at least the width of a letter and ends in a small hook, for example on BnF Copte 130<sup>2</sup> f. 127r or 130<sup>s</sup> f. 120v. The horizontal stroke of τ and † at the beginning of the line also starts in the margin (as the left alignment of the column is to the vertical strokes of the letters, not to their left extremities as was the case in the Akhmimic codex), but less striking when compared to that of Δ and X.

Finally, a very interesting scribal feature in this manuscript is the behaviour at the end of line. It is quite frequent that the last characters are comparatively smaller than they normally are in the line and compressed. Δ and υ in final position are normally cursive, whereas they are angular elsewhere in the line. Ϸ and ο can be either of the regular height but compressed horizontally, or round but smaller and higher than the baseline (as can be ω and ι). In this position, τ, γ and ϣ are normally written not only smaller but also higher than the baseline, with the horizontal (respectively left) stroke starting above the previous letter, not after it, resulting in a compressed aspect. When the penultimate letter is γ or τ, the following letter (be it υ, ϣ or Δ) can be not only compressed but written under the right stroke of γ or the vertical one of τ, and close to the vertical stroke.



Such compression at the end of line can involve up to three or four letters. For instance, on the verso of Louvre 9997, at the end on the twelfth line of the first column, the sequence  $\tau\epsilon\gamma$  is written in such a manner that  $\gamma$  follows  $\tau$  immediately and  $\epsilon$  is placed under the horizontal stroke of  $\tau$  and the left stroke of  $\gamma$ , all three letters being smaller than usual. In BnF Copte 132<sup>1</sup> f. 34r (see fig. 2), at the end of lines 1, 4 and 5 of the first column the sequences  $\eta\epsilon\zeta$ ,  $\omega\epsilon\tau$  and  $\eta\omicron\gamma$  are written with the consonants next to one another ( $\eta\zeta$ ,  $\omega\tau$ ,  $\eta\gamma$ ), while the vowels ( $\epsilon$ ,  $\epsilon$ ,  $\omicron$ ) are written smaller above the consonants. Similar phenomena have been documented in other majuscule manuscripts. For instance, in the so-called Codex Sinaiticus, the fourth-century Greek biblical pandect, the scribe customarily named D does this ‘with an attempt to justify the text-column’.<sup>29</sup> However, in the case of MONB.AM it is fairly clear that this practice does not produce a justified right margin to match the quite neat left margin of the block of text. Nor does it seem an effort to finish a word on the same line, since words are split. It is perhaps an effort to not split syllables or compounds over two lines.

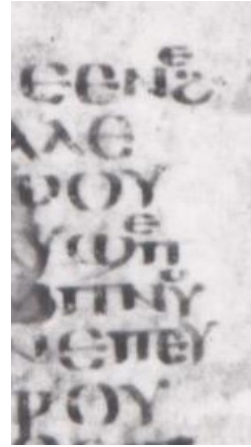


Fig. 2. End of line behaviour in MS Paris, BnF Copte 132<sup>1</sup>, f. 34r.

c. *The Lost Codex | LDAB 107957*

Inventory: (formerly) KU Leuven, University Library no. 7

[*Les manuscrits coptes de l'Université de Louvain*, no. 26]

Contents: *Similitude* 8.5.6—8.6.4

In the editio princeps of this codex published in 1939, Lefort mentions that he bought a bifolium of white parchment during a ‘récent voyage en Égypte’ from a dealer in Cairo.<sup>30</sup> Unfortunately, one year later the manuscript was lost to the fire which burned down the University Library in Leuven. So far as I could verify, no image of it has survived, which could have been employed for an reevaluation of the dating, or for scribal behaviour. Lefort dates it to the fifth-sixth century in the first publication, and to the fifth in the second.<sup>31</sup> The description offered in Lefort’s successive editions makes the lost codex

29 Head 2015, 128.

30 Lefort 1939, 223.

31 Lefort 1939, 223: ‘L’écriture, d’un type oncial régulier V<sup>e</sup>–VI<sup>e</sup> siècle, est fort semblable à celui du Josué grec de la collection Freer’, whereas later this is narrowed down, in Lefort 1952, viii: ‘L’écriture, en onciales régulières et nerveuses, est vraisemblablement du V<sup>e</sup> siècle’. The comparandum mentioned in the editio prin-



interesting nonetheless from the point of view of its historical reception. It measured  $12 \times 9$  cm ('c'est-à-dire plus large que haut'<sup>32</sup>), and only one folio had text on it in one column which measured  $98 \times 75$ , the other being left blank. On the flesh side the written folio also had a 'quire' signature,  $\overline{\alpha}$ , and pagination on both sides,  $\overline{\rho\zeta\beta}$  respectively  $\overline{\rho\zeta\gamma}$ . This would have been therefore the first folio of the 11th gathering, whose first two pages were numbered 162 and 163. As the text on page 162 started in the middle of a sentence, it seems to have been intended as a continuous text of a multi-quire codex. However, the text stops mid-sentence on page 163 mid-line 18, more specifically mid word— $\tau\chi\omicron\lambda\epsilon\varsigma$ —according to Lefort's reconstruction. As page 162 had 24 lines, page 163 is one third empty. No further text is written on the other two pages of the bifolium, which presumably would have been the last of the gathering, had the scribe continued his work.

Lefort notes that this might be due to the fact that the scribe 'n'avait qu'un modèle mutilé, ou bien qu'il a cessé son travail pour un motif que nous ne pouvons deviner', and is certainly right to recommend caution against 'de vaines conjectures sur la teneur du Pasteur qu'ill [the manuscript] représente'.<sup>33</sup> The fact that the scribe stops mid-word, however, rather speaks against a mutilated exemplar: if that was the case, the scribe could have stopped before the mutilated word, or supplemented the missing letters in order to complete the sense unit, assuming that he was able to understand what he was copying (and we have seen earlier that a scribe can divide words by syllables at the end of line, hence able to discern 'sense units' to a certain degree). Lefort is of course right that if this is an interruption of the work of the scribe, i.e. for a reason which is external to the scribal activity, we cannot guess that reason. However, if we attempt to think of this in connection with the work of the scribe, hence as involving a decision that has to do with the process of the production process of the codex, then other scenarios are possible. For instance, in the case of the so-called Codex Sinaiticus it was possible to document the use of 'cancel leaves' which replace initial leaves in a codex for either textual reasons (e.g. a larger haplography) or simply for recalculating and redistributing the available space.<sup>34</sup> All in all, as far as the reception of the *Shepherd* in Coptic is concerned, the lost Louvain no. 26 is a codex written in biblical majuscule (if the parallel with LDAB 3288 holds) during the fifth or the sixth century, with at least 163 pages and 11 gatherings, which included the *Shepherd*, or parts of it, either on its own, or with other texts. Unfortunately, it does

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ceps is LDAB 3288, currently where dated to the second half of the fifth century by P. Orsini, in *P. Antinoupolis I*, at 118.

32 Lefort 1952, viii.

33 Lefort 1952, ix.

34 Jongkind 2007, 44–46.

not overlap with the text of MONB.AM in order to verify whether Louvain no. 26 represents a separate Coptic translation.

## 2. *A Truncated Coptic Transmission?*

Lefort finishes his presentation of the Sahidic fragments of MONB.AM by concluding that the initial codex started ‘probablement’ with the Fifth *Vision*, serving as an introduction to the rest of the book.<sup>35</sup> Some hesitation notwithstanding, he also holds this to be true of the Akhmimic codex.<sup>36</sup> His overall assessment seems to be accepted by Carlini and others,<sup>37</sup> and with some caution by Giet,<sup>38</sup> but if ascertained, this would be indeed a remarkable feature in reception history.

The background for this proposal is the long-standing assumption in the scholarship on the *Shepherd of Hermas* that the book might have circulated in early Christian Egypt split in two books, the first four *Visions* on the one hand, and the *Mandates* and *Similitudes*, with the fifth *Vision* as an introduction, on the other. This suggestion was first made by C. Bonner in 1925 in relation to his reconstruction of P.Mich. 2.2.129 (LDAB 1097), which contains a large part of the Greek text of *Hermas*,<sup>39</sup> and has proved remarkably successful in subsequent scholarship.<sup>40</sup>

However, it can be argued that despite the virtually general acceptance, Bonner’s proposal does not withstand close scrutiny, as it rests on two levels of conjecture, both questionable.<sup>41</sup> Put briefly, since the first surviving page would have been numbered 51 (calculated from the numbering present on other pages) Bonner proposed that page 1 would have had either the end of Mand. 4.1 on it or the beginning of Mand. 4.2. Postulating then that this could not have been the beginning of the codex, he further conjectures (this time

35 Lefort 1952, viii: ‘On peut donc conclure que ce codex sahidique [the Paris-Cairo codex] présentait le Pasteur comme suit: 1° probablement la V<sup>e</sup> *Vision* servant d’introduction [...]’.

36 Lefort 1952, iii and especially vii: ‘Les données paléographiques [of MONB.AM] font ainsi apparaître un type de Pasteur sans les *Visions* (sauf peut-être la courte 5<sup>e</sup>) tel qu’apparaît le Pasteur du papyrus Michigan *et celui du codex akhmimique ci-dessous*’, emphasis added.

37 Carlini 1983; Hellholm 2010, 218; Tornau and Ceconi 2014, 7.

38 Giet 1963, 75, quoted by Lucchesi 1989, 396, n. 3, who in turn thinks that ‘si existence indépendante il y a eu, elle est plus accidentelle que primitive’. See also Leutzsch 1998, 130.

39 Bonner 1934. Before that, Bonner had published a description and important variant readings in Bonner 1925.

40 See for example Joly 2011, 15; Snyder 1968, 4; Carlini 1987, 32–34; Ayán Calvo 1995, 23–24; Osiek 1999, 3. And, discussed here, Lefort 1952, iii and especially vii.

41 For a recent full discussion see Batovici 2016a.

with no ground whatsoever in the manuscript) that initially the manuscript would have had 16 more leaves, and that they would have started with the fifth *Vision*. This would be an exceptionally exact estimation, given that this *Vision* covers about one page of the Loeb Classical Library volume, which would have to be no less than 66 manuscript pages away from the first surviving page of P.Mich. 2.2.129.<sup>42</sup> For these reasons, Bonner's ingenious reconstruction remains a speculation; the proposed identification of the starting point of the original manuscript is far more exact than what the evidence allows for; and therefore P.Mich. 2.2.129 does not constitute positive evidence for either the separate circulation in Egypt of the first four *Visions*, or of the rest of the book starting with the fifth *Vision*.<sup>43</sup>

It can be shown that Lefort's argument displays similar shortcomings. In the case of the Akhmimic codex, which he seems to take as a single gathering, regular codex as far as the fibre succession is concerned—i.e.  $\downarrow \rightarrow$  until the middle, then  $\rightarrow \downarrow$  until the end—Lefort notes that 'Le milieu de la farde tombait ... à la fin du ch. VII ou au début du ch. VIII de la IX<sup>e</sup> *Similitude*. Or, selon C. Bonner, à cette endroit du texte on se trouve assez exactement au milieu d'un Pasteur ne comprenant pas les *Visions*, sauf la V<sup>e</sup>, qui servait d'introduction.'<sup>44</sup> However, both assumptions are questionable. On the one hand, there are papyrus codices that do not keep to  $\downarrow \rightarrow | \rightarrow \downarrow$  fibre succession pattern, especially those with more than one quire (a possibility which cannot be ruled out) but not only.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, the point of reference for Bonner's own estimation is based on a printed edition—'the *editio minor* of Gebhard, Harnack, and Zahn, which is closely printed and has no footnotes to disturb the equality of the pages'<sup>46</sup>—and does not take into consideration any sort of variation, even though the manuscript indeed varies in terms of both the number of lines per page and of letters per line. This rigidity in estimation is then echoed in the far too exact identification of the fifth *Vision* as the beginning of the text, which covers as said little more than one page

42 Bonner 1925, 118, and Bonner 1934, 13–14, discussed in Batovici 2016a, 385–388. A somewhat similar proposal was put forth in the case of P.Bodmer 38, which contains the first three visions and breaking off at Vis. 3.13.4 [21]: A. Carlini suggested that it probably ended with the fourth *Vision* (for which a bifolium in the middle would have been necessary in his view), but does not exclude the possibility that more bifolia could have been there originally; Carlini 1991, 12, discussed in detail in Batovici 2016a, 388–390.

43 Batovici 2016a, 390.

44 Lefort 1952, iii.

45 Turner 1977, 65–67, shows that there are exceptions to this rule even among single-gathering codices.

46 Bonner 1925, 118.

of a Loeb Classical Library edition, whereas the whole text of the *Shepherd* covers nearly 150 pages. The section which follows it on the next page—the first *Mandate*—would have been an equally possible candidate.<sup>47</sup> In any event, considering also the fact that, as already noted by Lefort, the absence of numbering on the surviving folia leaves us with no positive evidence for confirming the truncated hypothesis for the Akhmimic papyrus codex, any such proposal seems improbable.<sup>48</sup>

In the case of the fragmentary Paris/Cairo Sahidic codex, the existing numbering may well suggest that the initial page ‘1’ might not have had the first *Vision* on it. However, whether it started with the fifth *Vision* or something else remains unclear. Other reconstructions are certainly possible, and have been formulated.<sup>49</sup> Finally, the third published Coptic *Hermas* manuscript, the Leuven bifolium which was lost in fire, apparently had a quire signature (11) and pagination (162, 163), which, according to Lefort’s estimation, would have allowed for the whole of the *Shepherd*, including the *Visions*, though this, too, would be a speculation.

On scrutiny, the Coptic reception of the *Shepherd* does not offer any positive evidence of the separate circulation of the first four *Visions*, or of the rest of the book. This does not mean the book was only transmitted as a whole, but the clear-cut identification of the split right before the fifth *Vision* finds no support in the extant manuscripts in Coptic, just as it does not in Greek. It is remarkable how this long-standing proposal went unquestioned, with ramifications in the Latin, Coptic, and Greek scholarship on the *Shepherd*, but it is nonetheless a case of a conjecture taken as an assured reconstruction in subsequent scholarship.

### **3. In lieu of Conclusion: The Akhmimic Codex as a Biblical Pandect**

In closing, I would briefly touch upon the question of the initial state of the Akhmimic codex of the *Shepherd*. Lefort reported in the early 1950s that he had received a box of papyrus scraps. His success in piecing together the eight leaves of the *Shepherd*, at a time when no other Coptic text of this book existed, is a remarkable achievement in itself. Moreover, from that lot of scraps he also reconstructed leaves of Exodus and the Gospel of Luke in the same

47 Batovici 2016a, 386.

48 Lefort 1952, iii too notes ‘nous prive d’un élément de nature à confirmer ou à infirmer cette conclusion’.

49 See for instance the suggestion in Lucchesi 1989, 395, based on the similarity of hand, scribal habits, and format, that this codex might have been the second volume of a double-codex, where the first volume would have contained the *Revelation* (Zoega no. 89) and the *Visions* of the *Shepherd* and the second—the Paris/Cairo Codex—the *Mandates* and the *Similitudes*.

dialect, having the same format, and being written by the same hand. The question therefore rises whether the Exodus, Luke, and *Hermas* leaves belonged to the same initial codex, paralleling perhaps in this regard the Codex Sinaiticus, a multiple text manuscript where the Epistle of Barnabas and the *Shepherd* are written with or after the Old and the New Testament, or Codex Alexandrinus, where 1 and 2 Clement follow the Old and the New Testament. There are not many, especially early, Coptic manuscripts where biblical and non-biblical books appear together. An isolated example would be the Crosby-Schøyen MS 193, a one-quire codex which groups Jonah, 2 Maccabees, 1 Peter, and Melito of Sardis' *Peri Pascha*,<sup>50</sup> and the addition to the Leuven/Louvain Akhmimic leaves to this exception might be interesting.

In short, when using current codicological terminology, it is quite possible that the Exodus, Luke and *Hermas* leaves in Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve were the result of the same production process, in which case they would form one production unit,<sup>51</sup> irrespective of whether it was one initial codex, or two, or indeed three. They certainly reached Lefort as the same circulation unit, dismembered and broken to pieces as it was, and remained so until the split of the Leuven university in the 1970s, when five *Hermas* leaves went to Louvain-la-Neuve, where the French part of the old university reformed. In any event, since they seem connected at both ends (at the production time by the same hand and same dimensions, and in post-discovery times by the bunch received by Lefort), they may well have been a circulation unit all along, in which case the question of whether they formed one codex or more is perhaps irrelevant. To conclude, if in the case of the two Greek codices, Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus, the inclusion of the Apostolic Fathers led to a debate as to whether these manuscripts reflect canonical status for the Epistle of Barnabas, the *Shepherd*, and 1 and 2 Clement,<sup>52</sup> in a Coptic context the inclusion of the *Shepherd* with books from the Old and New Testament may seem less problematic if one regards it as reflecting a view akin to Athanasius of Alexandria's *Festal letter* 39, where the list of canonical books (κανονιζόμενα) is followed by a secondary category of books, appointed by the fathers to be read (ἀναγιγνώσκεισθαι) for instruction, which include the *Shepherd* and the *Didache*.<sup>53</sup>

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50 Buzi 2016, 95. The article offers an overview of multiple text Coptic codices.

51 For the terminology see Andrist, Canart and Maniaci 2013, 59–61.

52 For a survey see Batovici 2016b, 583–584.

53 Greek text in Joannou 1963, 71–76.

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