The Rite of the ‘for the Psalmist’

[El ritual del ‘para el Salmista’]

Youhanna Nessim Youssef
Centre for Early Christian Studies
Australian Catholic University
youhanna.youssef@acu.edu.au

Resumen: En el presente artículo llevamos a cabo la edición del ritual de ordenación del Salmista según dos manuscritos del siglo XIV. Ofrecemos una descripción completa de los manuscritos y de su contexto arqueológico.

Abstract: In the present article, we edit the rite of ordination of the Psalmist according to two manuscripts from the fourteenth century. We will give a full description of the manuscripts and their archaeological context.

Palabras clave: Textos litúrgicos coptos. Textos copto-árabes. Historia medieval.

Key words: Coptic liturgical texts. Coptic-Arabic texts. Medieval history.

Introduction

The psalmist is one of the minor (priestly) orders attested very early in the Egyptian Church. This Order is mentioned in the Nomocanon of Ibn al-‘Assal (1238 A.D.) that deals with the ranks of sub-deacon, reader, psalmist, porter and deaconess. Although some scholars suggest that the order of the psalmist did not

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2 Chapter 8.
exist in the thirteenth century, the text presented here attests that the order of the psalmist did in fact exist at this time.

In his monumental book about the Coptic Church, O.H. E. Burmester speaks about the sacrament of the Holy Orders, but he does not include the Rite of the ordination of the psalmist. In addition, it is noteworthy to mention that Burmester does not even mention the rite of ordination of the psalmist in his edition of the Ordination Rites (a posthumous work).

Psalmist in the Medieval writers

Unlike Gabriel V and Ibn al-Sabā who do not mention this order, only Ibn Kabar comments on the rite of ordination of the psalmist in his encyclopaedia the Lamp of Darkness, and yet although he does not provide the text of the prayer of ordination, he gives some important details that are absent from our manuscripts.

Here is the text of Ibn Kabar:

\[
\text{الابصلمدس وهو المرزل والابصلمدس الذي يصير اغسطم امام الاسقف فأ نه عند تقدمته يضرب المطانوة ويقف مكشوف الرأس متطامن العنق ويصلي عليه ثلث اواشي - الآوله}
\]

الله العظيم الغني

\[
\text{إساأ وطلب اليك يا يد}
\]

\[
\text{لبن}
\]

\[
\text{الله العظيم الغني}
\]

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10 Read פִּינִיוֹר
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The psalmist, who is the one who sings and who will (also) be the reader, (stands) before the bishop, and with head uncovered, genuflects, after which with head bowed, three litanies will be completed upon him:

First litany: “We ask and beseech You O our Master”

Second litany: “O God who is great and beneficient”

Third litany: “O Master, Lord, and God almighty”

Following these prayers, let (the psalmist) kiss the altar and (hand of the) bishop, and (exchange a holy kiss with) those in attendance; after which the bishop will make a sign of the cross, saying: “Glory and honour to the Holy Trinity. Peace and edification to the Church of God. Amen.”

The original edition of the Rites of Ordination by Athanasius, metropolitan of Beni Sueif did not include this rite; however, the new edition provides the Arabic translation. The only other edition that includes this rite is the edition of Tukhi.
Abbreviations

A  Ms Saint Antony 1 Liturgy
CM Ms Coptic Museum 253 Liturgy
T  Tukhi edition

Manuscripts

In this text, we will use the two oldest manuscripts known to mention the rite, in addition to the edition of Tukhi referenced above.

The manuscript Liturgy 1 from the Monastery of Saint Anthony

Pontifical
1) Ordination services of the reader to the patriarch.
2) Consecration of the fonts.
3) Consecration of all the vessels of the altar.
4) Consecration of a hermit.
5) Consecration of the relics of the saints.
6) Consecration of the Myron (Chrysm).
7) Mystagogia.
8) Preparation of the Myron by anba Yû’annis the eightyith (patriarch) known as Ibn Qiddîs.
9) Preparation of the Myron by Anbā Theodosius the seventy-ninth (patriarch).
10) Consecration of a restored church.
11) Prayer for the portable altar (in different handwriting).

97 folios + 6 blank folios, dated 7 Bābah 1050 AM (1334 AD). The name of the scribe is Anbā Ibrāhîm bishop of the diocese of Koskam. The sponsor is the priest Gabriel (Ghubiyyâl) and his nephew in the Monastery of Saint Philotheus, known as the Monastery of Al-Nastûr near Birkat al-Habaš outside of Miṣr. The manuscript was donated by Anbā Athanasius in the year 1504 AM (1788 AD), and another by Timothy, metropolitan of Jerusalem in 1629 AM (1913 AD).

Fol. 41r

نقله لنفسه المسكين بخطيّاه الراجي عنو الله ابرام خادم كرسي قسقام واوقفه علي القس غبريال ابن اخه القس بدير القديس فيلاواس المعروف بدير النسطور بركة الحبش يظهر مصر المحرسة فن
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“... He who (has made this) copy by himself, the poor, sinful one who is begging God’s pardon, Abraam, servant of the seat of Koskam, and has endowed (it) to the priest Gabriel, his nephew, the priest in the Monastery of Saint Philotheus, known as the Monastery of Al- Nastûr at Birkat al-Habaš, located outside of the protected (city) of Misr. Whosoever shall dare to take it will be until such time that he returns it. The remembrance of my (name) shall not be removed from it. This holy endowment was (copied) on Monday the seventh (day) of the month Bâbah in the year 1050 of the pure martyrs (1334 AD). May God grant us their intercessions. If the abovementioned goes to the Eternal Home, this (endowment) will be for his brethren and their children after them. May God grant benefit to the endowed and his household after him. May He inscribe our names in His Kingdom, together with His righteous ones and His saints. Amen”. 

Fol. 43v

In the name of God the merciful and the compassionate. 
Glory to God in the highest.

In the name of God, the most merciful, the compassionate. Glory to God in the highest.

An endowment to the Monastery of the great Saint Antony, in the monastery of Arabah. Whosoever shall take this endowment (from its place) or remove it forever to the countryside, shall be excommunicated and bound by the word of the Eternal God. May blessings come upon the children of obedience. All thanks be to God. 1504 AM (1788 AD)”. 

15 Erased.
16 Read the “desert”.
17 Alluding to the dependency of the Monastery of Saint Anthony in the village of Buš.
“The name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the one eternal
God, be upon us.
O Lord who sees this holy manuscript, remember the humble servant Dawūd
al-Akhmīmī who is a priest by name rather than by deeds. He is not from
Akhmīm but from a nearby village called al-Sawāmī’a. The
abovementioned was called Akhmimi as his village was not known by
everybody. I have sinned since writing in this precious manuscript and I beg
pardon and forgiveness from my fathers and my brethren. In the year 1572
AM (1852 AD)”.

“In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the One God.
In the name of God the merciful and the compassionate. God of salvation, my hope,
I will not...
Timothy, by the grace of God, Metropolitan of the holy city Jerusalem. 7 Hatūr in
the year 1629 of the Martyrs”.

18 Over the line with another hand
of the Patriarch of the Egyptian Church known as the History of the Holy Church, «Textes et
20 S. TMM, Das christlich-koptische Ägypten in arabischer Zeit, «Beilhefter zum Tübinger Atlas des
vorderen Orients» 41,Teil 2 (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1988), pp. 655, 663, 675-676.
The abovementioned manuscript was copied during the patriarchate of Benjamin II who was the 82nd Alexandrian patriarch (1327-1339). He is one of the less known patriarchs in the history of the Coptic Church and his biography was authored by an anonymous writer.

Nevertheless, he is known for the restoration of several churches; such as the Church of Saint Shenouda in Old Cairo, the Monastery of Saint Bishoi and the Monastery of Saint Macarius. We may assume that this manuscript was copied for the consecration of the restored churches. The manuscript was found in the collection of the Monastery of Saint Philotheus known as the Monastery of al-Nastûr. It is noteworthy that two other manuscripts from the same monastery are in the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris.

The foliotations of this manuscript, we find writing in modern pencil continued in Arabic throughout the manuscript. In our text (which belowmentioned) we have another foliotation in Coptic uncial, that starts with \( A \).

Our text occurs in folios \( \text{ð} \) verso and \( \text{ð} \) recto

The manuscript 253 Liturgy

In Simaika’s Catalogue our manuscript is described as follows:

Pontifical

1) Ordination Services for the Orders of reader to patriarch.
2) The consecration of the fonts.
3) The consecration of altar vessels.
4) Prayer for a ἔκθεσις “singer”.

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22 For the sources of this part cf. J. DEN HEIJER, Mawhub ibn Mansur ibn Mufarrig et l’historiographie Copto-Arabe, CSCO 513 (Louvain: Peeters, 1989), pp.142-143.
27 MARCUS SIMAIKA and YASSA ‘ABD AL-MASHH, Catalogue of the Coptic and Arabic Manuscripts in the Coptic Museum, the Patriarchate, the principal Churches of Cairo and Alexandria and the Monasteries of Egypt (Cairo, 1939), I:1, p. 72, number 142.
5) Prayer for an anchorite.
6) Prayer for the relics of the saints.
7) The consecration of the myron (chrism).
8) The mystagogia Copto-Arabic.
9) The preparation of the myron by Anbā Theodosius and Anbā Yū‘annis the 79th and the 80th patriarchs Arabic.
10) Consecration of the restored church.
11) Other prayers, Copto-Arabic instruction to the parents of deacons in Arabic at the beginning in a different hand. Index is in a recent hand.

In Graf’s Catalogue we find the following description:


Rituel du rite copte, en langues copte et arabe:

1. Ordination (قسمة) du lecteur, ff.3r-5r; 2. du sous-diacre, if. 6r-9v. 3. Consécration (تكريز) du diacre, ff. 10r-14r; 4. Du prêtre, ff. 14v-19r; 5. d’un higoumène (مصري), ff. 19v-23v; 6. de l’archidiacre, ff.24r-26v; 7. de l’évêque, ff. 26v - 37r.

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17. Prière pour un chantre, f. 70v sq.; 18. pour un ermite, ff. 71r-72v; 19. pour les corps des martyrs, f. 73r sq. 20. Canon (ou rite de la consécration) du chrème (الميرون القدس), ff. 74r-96v. 21. Rite de la consécration de l’huile (المسطوحجة), ou croyance que N. S. Jésus Christ a enseigné à ses disciples, afin que les fidèles la disent avant la Messe, ff. 102r-107r. 22. Mystagogie (المسطوغوجيا), ou croyance que N. S. Jésus Christ a enseigné à ses disciples, afin que les fidèles la disent avant la Messe, ff. 108r-110r. 23. Psalie (ليابصا) qui doit être chantée après la prière de l’Aurore, quand le patriarche monte à la chambre haute (العلية) pour faire le chrème, f.107v. 24. Psalie qui est chantée à la procession du chrème sacré, f.107 v sq. 25. Psalie qui est chantée pendant la consécration du chrème, ff. 108v-115r. 26. Livre du canon du chrème sacré selon l’usage traditionnel au couvent de Saint-Macaire. Nous écrivons ce qui s’est passé, quand il a été cuit dans une assemblée de quinze évêques aux jours du patriarche Théodose, le 79 patriarque, le 17 barmsidah (12 avril) correspondant au 7 ragab 698 H. (=10 avril 1299 Ch.) dans l’église de Saint-Mercure au Caïre, non pas dans l’église d’al-Mu’allaqa, comme quelques-uns voulusaient, car dans cette maison il y avait des troubles, et les chrétiens craignaient, ff. 120r - 115v. Suit une note d’Anba Yusab, tirée de son livre, if. 115v-115r. 27. Rapport sur la consécration du chrème faite par le patriarche Théodose en 1015 M. (1299 Ch.), ff. 115r-113r en arabe seulement. 28. Extrait de la deuxième partie du livre de la collection des remèdes rares (كتاب جامع الادوية المفردة), composé par Abu Bakr Hamid ibn Samhūn, le médecin, ff. 113rc-112v. 29. Rapport sur une autre consécration faite par le patriarche Jean connu sous le nom d’Ibn al-Qiddīs qui est le 80 patriarche, dans le couvent de Saint-Macaire, le 17 barmsidah 1021 M. (= 12 avril 1305 Ch.), lundi de la Semaine-Sainte, if. 112r-110v, en arabe seulement. 30. Rite de la nouvelle consécration d’une église détruite et restaurée, if. 121v-142v. 31. Autre rite pour la préparation du chrème sacré et de l’huile de galiyâlon après un manuscrit trouvé dans (l’église d’al-Mu’allaqa au Caïre, ajouté après l’achèvement de ce manuscrit, ff. 143r-149v. Addition: «Commandement qui doit être lu aux parents des diacres quand ceux-ci ont été ordonnés», ff. 2v-1v, en arabe.
In the name of God.

He who cares for this holy book that contains the consecration and the concoction of the Myron and all that follows, the righteous man, who is holy to God, and walks in all the commandments of the Lord blamelessly, the good father, who is full of the grace of the Holy Spirit, the priest John (Yûhannâ) who is the minister of the Church of the Lady Madonna, the pure holy Virgin, Mary, in the Church of al-Mu’allaqah. May the Lord preserve his life for many peaceful years. May all his enemies be subdued under his feet, through the prayers of the pure God-Bearer and all the sublime angels and those who have pleased and are pleasing to the Lord of all the descendants of Adam. Amen!

Dated in the month of Baramhât in the year 1080 of the pure martyrs. May God grant us their blessings.

For the library of the Virgin, an endowment for the Church of the Lady Madonna at Mu’allaqâh.

(Written with a recent hand) the number of the written folios is 147.

This manuscript was copied during the patriarchate of John XI29 the eighty-fifth patriarch of Alexandria (1363-1369). The biography of John XI occupies only three lines in the History of the Patriarchs.30 He is named as Father Yûhannâ al-Mu’taman al-Shâmî, thus denoting his Syrian origin. He was a man of learning and great virtue. We know nothing of his monastic life or his affiliation with one of the recognized Coptic monasteries. He ascended the papal throne during the reign of the Bahri Mamlûk Sulṭân, al-Ashraf Sha’bân (1363-1377), and thus we can assume that his patriarchate was a peaceful one.

According to Nakhlâh,31 and Myuser,32 the Ms 286 Lit (Patriarchal library) mentioned that John XI (Yu’anni al-Mu’taman) consecrated the Myron in the year 1085 AM (1369 AD) and was assisted by twenty bishops.

Our text occurs in folio 0 verso and 0x recto. The edition of the Tukhi changed the rubrics relating to the monastery and ‘Patriarch’ is replaced by ‘Bishop’.33

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31 Kamel Šalîh Nakhlâh, "سلسلة تاريخ البابوات بطرقارة الكرسي الإسكندري" (The series of the history of the Popes, the Alexandrian Patriarchs) (Cairo, 2001, 2nd ed.), II, p. 44.
Archaeological context

As the pontifical is a rite performed only by a bishop or patriarch, we would hence expect that the manuscript to be located in a patriarchal church.

Ms A was written for the Monastery of Philotheus. This monastery was in the possession of the patriarchs, as several Coptic patriarchs and bishops of Misr were buried in the adjoining cemetery: Zechariah, Athanasius III, John VII, Theodosius II and John IX.34 The monks of the Monastery of Saint Antony were a powerful force in determining the history of the Coptic Church for about two centuries following its repopulation (in the 16th century). Eight Antonian monks in unbroken succession became patriarchs; from John VI (1676-1718) to Cyril IV (1854-1861).35 One of the readers is Athanasius of Saint Antony’s Monastery who later became Athanasius bishop of Abu Tig. He was a famous restorer of manuscripts; something he did up until a few months before his episcopal ordination.36 In Addition, one of the readers was the future Cyril IV.37

Ms CM was in the possession of the Church of al-Mu’allaqah which was also one of the patriarchal residences for a period of time.38 It seems this prayer may have Sahidic origins, as àauh should be òtàh.39 This paper highlights once more the importance of the Liturgical text.

Text

40. ΟΥΣΕΓΧΗ ΕΧΕΗ ΟΥΜ ΕΥΘΑΛΙΚΗ ΠΗΣΑΝΟΛΟΣ ΦΙΝΗ ΠΙΓΕ ΦΙΤ ΠΠΙΛΙΜΟΡΓΑΝΨ ΦΙΟΤ

صلأ علي من يصير يسلم

A prayer for one who will become a psalmist

O Master, Lord, God


40. A. OYEEY
alright, the Father of our Lord and our God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. We ask and beseech You, O lover of mankind, for Your servant who is standing before You, who flees from before You, who stands before You, who flees Universal and Apostolic church. Enlighten him to the sweetness of Your holy words. Grant him to sing to You with understanding the spiritual odes. May he be worthy to start in faith and worship You in wisdom and purity. Purify him, bless him, fill him with Your fear. Keep him through Your angelic might. Make Him rich in all good honour and perfect gifts. In order that he may live according to Your holy and blessed will (so that he may be) pleasing to You, so that he may progress in what is great and perfect by Your Holy Spirit. Through the intercession of Your only-Begotten Son our Lord Jesus, Christ to whom...
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