

The Coptic book between the 6th and the 8th century



Codicological features, places of
production, intellectual trends

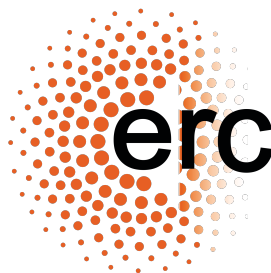
International conference
September 21-22, 2017



SAPIENZA
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA



Tracking Papyrus and Parchment Paths
An Archaeological Atlas
of Coptic Literature



The Coptic book between the 6th and the 8th century: codicological features, places of production, intellectual trends

International Conference
Rome, 21-22 September 2017
Programme

21 September

Sapienza Università di Roma.

Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia. Piazzale Aldo Moro 5

Dip. di Storia Culture Religioni. 'Aula A' of the section of historical-religious studies (second floor)

Literary culture(s), and book production in Egypt between the 6th and the 8th century

- 10.00 Welcome address, Emanuela Prinzivalli, Director of the Dept. of History Cultures Religion
- 10.30 Paola Buzi, General introduction

I session

- 11.00 Gianfranco Agosti, "Greek and Coptic Paideia in Late Antique Egypt: Comparing the Incomparable?"
- 11.30 Daniele Bianconi, "The Greek Book during the 'Long Late Antiquity' "
- 12.00 coffee break
- 12.30 Tito Orlandi, "The monasteries of Shenoute and Macarius: a comparison between two different bibliological arrangements"
- 13.00 Paola Buzi, "The Coptic papyrus codices preserved in the Egyptian Museum, Turin: new strategies for the valorization and conservation of the library from This"
- 13.30 Lunch break

II session

- 15.00 Julian Bogdani, “‘PATHs’: an advanced draft of the information system”
15.30 Maria Chiara Giorda, “Encoding Coptic literature: new perspective of analysis and valorization of Coptic hagiographic and homiletic texts”
16.00 Coffee break
16.30 General discussion

20.00 Dinner (Casa dell’Aviatore)

22 September

Academia Belgica
Via Omero 8

Coptic Books from the Theban region

- 10.00 Welcome address, Wouter Bracke, Director of the Academia Belgica

I session

- 10.30 Elisabeth R. O’Connell, “Theban books in context”
11.00 Anne Boud’hors, “Revisiting P.Bodmer 58 in the light of book production and circulation in Thebes (7th cent.)”
11.30 coffee break
12.00 Ewa Wipszycka, Tomasz Górecki, “Scoperta di tre codici copti a Tebe Occidentale: il contesto archeologico”
12.30 Renate Dekker, “The manuscript containing the Sahidic Encomium on Bishop Pesynthius of Koptos: its conservation, significance and context”

13.00 Lunch break

II session

- 14.30 Alberto Camplani, Federico Contardi, “The Canons attributed to Basil of Caesarea in the context of the canonical literature preserved in Coptic”
15.00 Nathan Carlig, “Osservazioni codicologiche sul codice pseudo-Basiliano del MMA 1152 (Cairo, Coptic Museum, inv. 13448)”
15.30 Agostino Soldati, “One of the earliest extant Coptic colophons”

- 16.00 Coffee break
- 16.30 Ágnes Mihálykó, “The Canons of Basil in the context of the liturgy in Western Thebes”
- 17.00 Przemysław Piwowarczyk, “Some remarks on the codex decoration and the text of Martyrium Petri preserved in the manuscript from Sheikh Abd el-Gurna”
- 17.30 General discussion
- 20.00 Dinner (Casa dell’Aviatore)

List of Participants

Speakers

Gianfranco Agosti
 Daniele Bianconi
 Julian Bogdani
 Anne Boud’hors
 Paola Buzi
 Nathan Carlig
 Alberto Camplani
 Federico Contardi
 Renate Dekker
 Maria Chiara Giorda
 Tomasz Górecki
 Agnes Mihálykó
 Elisabeth O’Connell
 Tito Orlandi
 Przemysła Piwowarczyk
 Agostino Soldati
 Ewa Wipszycka

Discussants

Alessandro Bausi
 Paul Canart
 Guglielmo Cavallo
 Lucio Del Corso
 Marilena Maniaci

Abstracts

(in alphabetical order)

Gianfranco Agosti

Sapienza Università di Roma

gianfranco.agosti@uniroma1.it

Greek and Coptic Paideia in Late Antique Egypt: Comparing the Incomparable?

Within the framework of a broader research project on Greek and Coptic culture in Late Antique Egypt (5th -7th century), this paper deals with the relations between Greek highbrow literary production (especially poetry) and Coptic literature, considered as two sides of the same coin. Indeed, rather than asking ‘trans-cultural’ questions – as the essay by M. Detienne alluded in the title does –, I propose to adopt an ‘intra-cultural’ approach, in order to shed an unusual light on the multicultural society of Late Antique Egypt.

The comparison of apparently distant texts, like epic poems in Greek and hagiographies in Coptic, can be helpful, in my submission, to better understand the attitude to classical paideia in Late Antique society, and to dismiss the old interpretive model of ‘the high vs the low’, too often declined as ‘Greek vs Coptic’.

Daniele Bianconi
Sapienza Università di Roma
daniele.bianconi@uniroma1.it

The Greek Book during the ‘Long Late Antiquity’

According to Byzantinists, the long period between the 6th and the 8th centuries is divided into two deeply different phases by the reign of Heraclius (610–641). In fact, its end represents an almost dramatic break, which is also reflected in the studies on the Greek written culture. However, the category of ‘Long Late Antiquity’, that Averil Cameron has developed a few years ago, by identifying a new and lower chronological limit, allows to overcome the break.

Even if the history of Byzantium cannot be treated as an undifferentiated continuum, because of certain both cultural and material adjustments occurring from the 7th century, phenomena of perdurance and long lasting resistances combine the early Byzantine centuries with the following period. According to this new perspective, the present contribution aims to investigate continuities and discontinuities in the Greek book production.

Julian Bogdani
Sapienza Università di Roma
julian.bogdani@uniroma1.it

‘PAThs’: an advanced draft of the information system

One of the most important tasks of the ‘PAThs’ project in its first year of activities has been the defining and the construction of the main information system apt to collect, contain and put in relation all the data and information the project was about to treat. The main core of the information system is an online relational database platform, that has been structured—and is continuously being remodelled—to better fit the evolving requirements of the project. Reconstructed manuscripts, literary works, authors, archaeological and literary places are thoroughly being described and connected to each other following a relational schema, that we are confident will be able to illustrate the development of Coptic literature through time in the Egyptian Late Antique and Early Medieval landscape. Great efforts have been spent in including in this schema the CMCL, the pioneer work of Tito Orlandi, which continues to provide a steady basis for all studies on Coptic literature. The development of the information system is still ongoing and open to the contribution of scholars or projects willing to collaborate.

Anne Boud'hors
CNRS, Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes
anne.boudhors@irht.cnrs.fr

Revisiting P.Bodmer 58 in the light of book production and circulation in Thebes (7th cent.)

The papyrus codex published by W.E. Crum, *Der Papyruskodex saec. VI-VII* of the Phillipsbibliothek von Cheltenham (Strasbourg 1915) was then transferred to the collection of Martin Bodmer in Geneva, where its inventory number is P.Bodmer 58. Without ever definitively affirming it, Crum had already collected several indices concerning the provenance of this manuscript, based both on its conditions of acquisition by Phillips and on the comparison with other manuscripts. He thus considered the Theban region (Western Thebes) as its probable place of origin. There is little doubt that this hypothesis is correct and that this manuscript can be considered one of the best representatives of the Theban codex around the 7th century.

This codex is a compendium of theological texts which may be worth reconsidering in the light of the progress that has recently made towards a better knowledge of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the monastic communities of this region.

My presentation, which is in some way an illustration or a complement to the wide survey proposed by E. Connell, will therefore aim to analyze this manuscript in all its aspects, paleography and codicology, content, production milieu.

Paola Buzi
Sapienza Università di Roma
paola.buzi@uniroma1.it

The Coptic papyrus codices preserved in the Egyptian Museum, Turin: new strategies for the valorization and conservation of the library from This

The seventeen Coptic papyrus codices purchased in Egypt by Bernardino Drovetti in the 1820s and preserved in the Egyptian Museum of Turin are a unique example of an entire well-preserved late antique library—very likely originally belonging to the cathedral of This—, reflecting the literary tastes and manufacturing features before what can be defined as the 9th-century Coptic book revolution, which significantly changed bookmaking in Christian Egypt.

We should not forget that in Egypt the shift from papyrus to parchment as a writing support was a technical innovation that directly affected the number of works transmitted by a single manuscript, its layout and sometimes even its contents.

In this respect, the This codices are the latest known example of an Egyptian library entirely transmitted by papyrus codices, probably to be dated between the end of the 7th century and the beginning of the 8th, and therefore represent a crucial and transitional instance in the history of Coptic books, which saw on the one hand the creation of new codicological and palaeographical features and on the other the progressive emergence of multiple-text codices.

The recent autoptic analysis of the codices, finalized to the project of cataloguing of the entire This library, has evidenced some features of these papyrus books that deserve new attention.

Moreover, a survey in the papyrotheca of the Egyptian Museum has shown that several other fragments belonging to the same codices have still to be classified and identified.

In this paper I will try to explain the importance of the This library and I will expose the planned interventions for its conservation and valorization, based on a formal collaboration between the PAtHs project the Egyptian Museum and the CSMC of Hamburg University.

Alberto Camplani
Sapienza Università di Roma
alberto.camplani@uniroma1.it

Federico Contardi
Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier
federico.contardi@hotmail.it

The Canons attributed to Basil of Caesarea in the context of the canonical literature preserved in Coptic

The discovery of a new, well preserved, Coptic codex of the pseudo-Basilian Canons, made by the Polish Archaeological Mission in Sheikh Abd el-Gurna, has greatly improved our knowledge of the manuscript tradition of this work, which previously consisted in a number of Coptic fragments and some inedited Arabic manuscripts (one of which was translated in German by Riedel). Before this discovery, the Canons were extant in a quotation of Canon 1 preserved in a Coptic liturgical paper manuscript (published by J. Dresher); two leaves from a lost papyrus codex coming from Deir Bala'izah (n. 31), with the text of Canon 36 (published by P. E. Kahle), some Chester Beatty leaves (ms 819C, ff. 1-8) from a parchment codex (Canons 48-96) likely deriving from the White Monastery (inedited), the Turin papyrus Codex XIII, which is constituted by a good number of fragmentary leaves partially edited by F. Rossi.

The aim of the first part of the paper (Federico Contardi) is both to give some examples of comparison of the texts preserved by the known codices, with a look to the Arabic manuscript tradition, and to reflect about the circulation of this work within the Coptic centres of production of books. The second part (Alberto Camplani) will study the work in the context of canonical literature preserved in Coptic, whether the result of a translation from Greek or an original creation in Coptic, on the basis of Orlandi's recent book on Coptic canons. As has been illustrated in recent publications, the Canons may be divided in the following sections: a Trinitarian and Christological profession of faith (canon 1); the traditional theme of the two ways, of good and evil (canon 2); marriage and its discipline (canons 3-19); penitence (canons 20-27); precepts for the lay (28-37); precepts for the clergy and prayers for consecration (canons 38-95); rules concerning the liturgy (canons 96-106). The focus will be on the structure and the contents of Basil's Canons in comparison with those Coptic works in which norms for Christian secular conduct are joined with the regulations for clerical hierarchy and directions for liturgy.

Nathan Carlig
Sapienza Università di Roma
nathan.carlig@uniroma1.it

Osservazioni codicologiche sul codice pseudo-Basiliano del MMA 1152 (Cairo, Coptic Museum, inv. 13448)

Scoperto nel 2005 in un eremo di Tebe Ovest insieme a due altri codici, il codice papiraceo Cairo, Coptic Museum inv. 13448 contiene i Canoni attribuiti a Basilio di Cesarea ed è datato provvisoriamente al vii/viii secolo. Ancora inedito, esso è già stato l'oggetto di numerose pubblicazioni incentrate sugli interventi di restauro, il testo tràdito e la codicologia. Sotto quest'ultimo aspetto tuttavia, manca tuttora una descrizione completa del codice.

In questa sede si intende colmare questa lacuna e proporre una descrizione codicologica secondo il protocollo di descrizione codicologica sviluppato nell'ambito del progetto ERC Advanced Grant "PATHs" diretto da Paola Buzi alla "Sapienza" Università di Roma. L'intervento renderà conto dell'esame effettuato in base alle riproduzioni fotografiche e metterà in luce alcune caratteristiche del manufatto come, per esempio, la struttura a fascicoli, la paginazione e la fascicolazione, i rotoli originari da cui sono stati prodotti i bifogli e alcuni elementi della mise en page del testo.

Renate Dekker
Universiteit Leiden
r.e.l.dekker@hum.leidenuniv.nl

The manuscript containing the Sahidic Encomium on Bishop Pesynthius of Koptos: its conservation, significance and context

Among the Coptic manuscripts that the Polish team headed by T. Górecki found near hermitage 1152 in Shaykh Abd al-Qurna in February 2005 was a paper codex including an early version of the Sahidic version of the Encomium on Bishop Pesynthius of Koptos. The edition was entrusted to me in September 2007, when I was a student (of Leiden University). Since then, I have devoted my MPhil-thesis, three articles and part of my PhD-dissertation to the Encomium, but text itself has not yet been published, on account of technical and practical reasons. Only the first half of the manuscript is available for study.

This paper first describes the condition in which of the manuscript was found, and the conservation work done by Anna Thommée, director of the Polish Ateliers for Conservation of Cultural Property. Despite repeated disinfection treatments and measures to control the humidity level, the manuscript got covered by toxic fungi and bacteria, causing progressive loss, and conservation work is suspended due to a lack of financial means. It is likely that the second half of the manuscript is lost. For this reason, this paper continues by discussing how the edition of the Encomium should be completed. I already prepared the first part of the Shaykh Abd al-Qurna version and the complete text version of AD 1005 edited by E.A.W. Budge, but am retyping the transcriptions, in order to meet the requirements for having it published in the series *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology Supplement*. Other important topics are the significance of the Shaykh Abd al-Qurna version, both historically and literary, and the context in which the manuscript was used and left.

Maria Chiara Giorda
Sapienza Università di Roma
mariachiara.giorda@uniroma1.it

Encoding Coptic literature: new perspective of analysis and valorization of Coptic hagiographic and homiletic texts

In my presentation, I will show how we are marking up a selected corpus of hagiographic and homiletic texts — that are consistent as for cultural and literary milieu, period and genre — in order to obtain useful information for the Atlas of Coptic Literature of the “PATHs” project and to put at disposal of other scholars annotated texts useful for further research.

Places, historical characters, heresiological groups, pagan deities, architectural typologies, are only some of the categories that are taken into account.

The selection of the first list of texts is based on the following criteria: easy access of the texts (thanks to the extraordinary resources offered by the CMCL in terms of electronic editions of Coptic literary works), geographical proximity and chronological homogeneity. In this occasion, the focus will be on Vita Pauli Tamma as a case-study, in order to show the characteristics of this system of text analysis and show the opportunities it offers related to the “PATHs” objectives.

Tomasz Górecki
Nation Museum in Warsaw

Ewa Wipszycka
University of Warsaw
e.wipszycka@uw.edu.pl

Scoperta di tre codici copti a Tebe Occidentale: il contesto archeologico

Il contesto archeologico della scoperta dei tre codici è un piccolo eremo (contenente due posti per dormire) situato nella necropoli tebana, che gli studiosi chiamano Tebe Occidentale. Esso occupava una parte dei locali di due sepolcri del periodo del Medio Impero – sepolcri che nel catalogo dei sepolcri tebani portano i numeri 1151 e 1152. Il sepolcro 1152, insieme con un ampio cortile e con una torre costruita all'interno di questo, serviva come luogo per dormire, preparare i cibi e lavorare; nel sepolcro 1151 si trovava l'oratorio. Questo eremo ci ha fornito non solo tre codici, ma anche numerosi altri oggetti: ceramica, ostraka copti, recipienti di metallo, oggetti di cuoio e pezzi di cuoio, materia prima preparata per la filatura, infine ceste e panieri. Questi reperti sono stati trovati o nei locali dell'eremo, o nel grande mucchio di rifiuti. La ceramica testimonia che l'eremo può essere stato abitato già dalla fine del V secolo ; gli ostraka ci assicurano che esso era usato ancora all'inizio dell'VIII secolo.

Essendo situato lontano dai principali sentieri che venivano percorsi nella tarda antichità e che oggi vengono percorsi dai turisti, questo eremo si è conservato bene. Il suo arredamento è paragonabile – nell'ambito di Tebe Occidentale – al famoso Monastero di Epifanio, esplorato da una missione del Metropolitan Museum sotto la direzione di H.E. Winlock.

Nella nostra comunicazione non ci limiteremo a parlare di questo eremo, ma mostreremo anche dei materiali illustrativi: una cartina dei dintorni che indica i siti monastici e la località più vicina, Jeme, fotografie di questa zona, dei locali dell'eremo e del luogo in cui furono trovati i tre codici.

Le campagne di scavo cominciarono nel 2003. I codici furono trovati nel 2005 nel mucchio di rifiuti davanti al sepolcro 1152.

Ágnes Mihálykó
University of Oslo
a.m.tothne@ifikk.uio.no

The Canons of Basil in the context of the liturgy in Western Thebes

The Canons of Basil, which have attracted renewed scholarly attention due to the recent discovery of a new codex in one of the hermitages of Western Thebes, contain a bulk of information on liturgical practices. While their evaluation remains problematic due to the uncertainties that surround the place and time of composition of the Canons, thanks to the discovery of the codex it is possible to pinpoint an area and time, the monasteries of Western Thebes in the 7th century, in which the Canons were read. The rich finds of papyri and ostraca in this area enable us to reconstruct, at least partially, its liturgy, which work has been accomplished in my PhD thesis defended at the University of Oslo.

On the basis of this reconstruction I will investigate if the Canons have any impact on the liturgy of the Theban monks or if we can observe them being put to practice. Or did the liturgy of Western Thebes influence the copy of the Canons that circulated in the area? In my paper, I will present some preliminary results of the investigation of the liturgy in the Canons of Basil and discuss it in the context of the liturgy of Western Thebes.

Elisabeth R. O'Connell

Dept. of Ancient Egypt and Sudan, The British Museum

EOConnell@britishmuseum.org

Theban books in context

In Late Antiquity, the ancient pharaonic necropolis on the desert escarpment of Western Thebes was installed with monasteries, churches, saints' shrines and dwellings. Most early excavators aimed to remove the evidence for Late Antique settlement in and around earlier, pharaonic temples and tombs in an effort to recover an (imagined) original monumental landscape. Conversely this long interest in and excavation of the region's royal and other elite cemeteries has resulted in an extraordinary body of Late Antique evidence. Until recently, textual evidence has taken pride of place, building on the remarkable achievements of W. E. Crum, so that over half of the published corpus of Coptic documentary texts (up to c.4300) can be attributed to the Theban region today (Delattre 2005–). By localizing papyri and ostraca documents within the Theban landscape, we are able to populate the monasteries, churches, saints' shrines and dwellings with named and titled individuals and to identify their networks.

Among archaeological objects uncovered in Western Thebes are codices and fragments thereof. More so than documentary texts, such literary texts are disassociated from their archaeological context, housed in libraries and the subject of learned editions focusing on their origins composition and stemma, rather than the communities who copied or read them or both. Knowledge of and research on the history of collections has identified books from or reported to be from the Theban region (Winlock and Crum 1926, 196–208; O'Connell 2010, 255–59), and new paleographic and codicological study is now revealing a distinctively Theban corpus (Boud'hors forthcoming and this conference). In parallel, the discovery of fragments of codex leaves and covers in controlled, documented and, most importantly, published, excavations, is gradually bringing into focus the production and use of codices in the region (e.g., Górecki 2005 *inter alia* and Górecki and Wipszycka, this conference; Hasznos 2013; Eichner 2015; Garel 2016; Müller forthcoming; cf. P.Marc 420–424).

This presentation will cast a wide-net, surveying Coptic and Greek literature and 'sub-literature', such as 'magical' texts, which are from or said to be from the Theban region, with the aim of better understanding archaeological context of the finds, and what this may reveal about the people who used them. The presentation will conclude with a discussion of possible correlations between the contents of 'libraries' and the places to

which they were donated or housed, using the example of the Edfu corpus, which contains narratives concerning St Mercurius, Apa Aaron and the Archangel Michael in codices that were copied for and donated to topoi dedicated to precisely these saints (O'Connell 2015).

Tito Orlandi
Sapienza Università di Roma
Accademia dei Lincei
orlandi@cmcl.it

The monasteries of Shenoute and Macarius: a comparison between two different bibliological arrangements

The codices that may be classified as ‘standard codices’, coming from the monasteries of Shenoute and Macarius, offer similar characteristics as for their chronological span (9th–11th centuries), their liturgical scope, and their choice of texts, mainly due to dates of celebrations. It is evident that a common cultural trend is at the base of their production. But it is interesting to observe the difference: the northern monastery is much more bound to the practical use, more rigid and restricted in its deriving habits, while the southern counterpart is much more rich and variegated.

This should point to the fact that the religious–cultural work of choice and transformation of the preexisting texts was in fact conducted in the Shenute monastery, which appears still the leader in Coptic culture, while the other monastery followed the trend, eventually to emerge as Copto–Arabic leader after the brief renaissance around the al-Assal brothers.

Przemysła Piwowarczyk
p.piwowarczyk@us.edu.pl

Some remarks on the codex decoration and the text of *Martyrium Petri* preserved in the manuscript from Sheikh Abd el-Gurna

The aim of the paper is to present two loaves from the parchment codex found during the excavations of the Polish Mission in Sheikh Abd el-Gurna. The most striking characteristic of the manuscript is the decoration on the first leaf. The first page (hair side) has border filled with a plaited ornament. The cross decorated with the same ornament divides the page into four fields with four units of text organized from top to bottom and from left to right. On the flesh side the text and decoration are badly damaged, but the figure of a bird is clearly visible.

The text itself has been recognized as a part of *Martyrium Petri*, roughly corresponding to the sections four to eight according to the subdivision in the standard edition of the Greek text by Lipsius. The opening section (roughly corresponding to the section four of the Greek text) was previously unknown in the Coptic translation.

The text from Sheikh Abd el-Gurna differs reasonably from the already published Coptic manuscripts of the *Martyrium*, although ultimately goes back to the same translation from Greek. It has the closest affinity with the the Moscow manuscript (Pushkin Fine Arts Museum, Moscow I.1.b.686, 4th–5th century), however some passages are abridged and many variant readings occur as well. Two Vatican manuscripts which contain passages of interest (Borgianus, cop. 109, xxvi, 128 and 129, both from the White Monastery) not only have numerous variant readings but also differ considerably in content from that of Sheikh Abd el-Gurna.

Agostino Soldati
Sapienza Università di Roma
agostino.soldati@uniroma1.it

One of the earliest extant Coptic colophon

The last page of the Theban codex Cairo, Coptic Museum inv. 13448 (originally Alexandria, National Museum, Copt. Ms. 1), bears a fully preserved colophon and two further fragmentary annotations written by different hands. Such concise colophon offers a new valuable instance of a till now poorly attested type of scribal subscriptions, later replaced by the more wordy model launched by the copyists of Toutōn, which then became canonical. It constitutes as well a new document enhancing our knowledge of the prosopography of Byzantine Thebes and it allows a pretty likely dating thanks to the analysis of its palaeographical features.