

# ADAMANTIUS

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Rivista del Gruppo Italiano di Ricerca su  
“Origene e la tradizione alessandrina”

Journal of the Italian Research Group on  
“Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition”

24

2018

*The Coptic Book: Codicological Features,  
Places of Production, Intellectual Trends*



**Morcelliana**

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## 1. Contributi

### 1.1 Sezioni monografiche

#### 1.1.1 The Coptic Book: Codicological Features, Places of Production, Intellectual Trends

##### Introduction

by  
Paola Buzi

The theme section of this issue of *Adamantius* collects the proceedings of the international conference *The Coptic book between the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> centuries: codicological features, places of production, intellectual trends* (Rome, “Sapienza” Università di Roma – Academia Belgica, 21-22 September 2017)<sup>1</sup>, organized within the scientific activities of the ERC project “PATHs - Tracking Papyrus and Parchment Paths: An Archaeological Atlas of Coptic Literature. Literary Texts in their Geographical Context: Production, Copying, Usage, Dissemination and Storage”, plus two more contributions – respectively dedicated to the Coptic version of the letter of Athanasius to the monk Dracontius, transmitted by a horizontal roll, and to the Coptic tradition of John Chrysostom’s homilies on the Epistle to the Hebrews – that, although exceeding the chronological limits dealt with the conference, are extremely relevant for the reconstruction of the development of the Christian Egyptian book and literary tradition.

It is important to stress that the term ‘book’ is meant here both as a material object – with its specific codicological and palaeographic features –<sup>2</sup> and as a carrier of texts and intellectual products. Moreover, it must be clear that the adjective “Coptic” is used in this context to refer to the entire Late Antique Christian Egyptian book production, therefore written also in Greek, and not only to books that transmit texts in the Coptic language.

The choice of dedicating a conference – the first of the “PATHs” project – to the book production between the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> centuries was not fortuitous: despite the important recent progresses made in the understanding of this period of the history of the Coptic book<sup>3</sup> – and of the book in general, since Egypt can be considered a real laboratory of the physical features of codices, in terms of formats, quire systems, bookbindings, combination and arrangement of texts –, much remains to be clarified and explored, such as the nature of

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<sup>1</sup> ERC Advanced Grant (2015) project n° 687567, hosted by “Sapienza” Università di Roma ([paths.uniroma1.it](http://paths.uniroma1.it); <https://atlas.paths-erc.eu>). See P. BUZI, *Tracking Papyrus and Parchment Paths: An Archaeological Atlas of Coptic Literature: Literary Texts in Their Geographical Context; Production, Copying, Usage, Dissemination and Storage (PATHs)*, *Early Christianity* 8 (2017), 507-516; P. BUZI – J. BOGDANI – N. CARLIG – M. GIORDA – A. SOLDATI, “*Tracking Papyrus and Parchment Paths*”: A New International project on Coptic Literature, *Rivista del Museo Egizio* 1 (2017) [<https://rivista.museoegizio.it/>]; P. BUZI – F. BERNO – J. BOGDANI, *The ‘PATHs’ Project: an Effort to Represent the Physical Dimension of Coptic Literary Production (Third–Eleventh centuries)*, *Comparative Oriental Manuscripts Studies Bulletin* 4.1 (???) 39-58.

<sup>2</sup> More and more specialists of manuscripts and early printed books, of various cultural areas and disciplines, are now studying the textual/cultural aspects of books in strict relation with their physical features, internal and external. See for instance B.J. FLEMING, *The Materiality of South Asian Manuscripts from the University of Pennsylvania MS Coll. 390 and the Rāmamālā Library in Bangladesh*, *Manuscript Studies* 1.1 (Spring 2017) 3-26, and B. WAGNER, M. REED (eds.), *Early Printed Books as Material Objects. Proceeding of the Conference Organized by the IFLA Rare Books and Manuscripts Section Munich, 19-21 August 2009*, Berlin-Munich 2010.

<sup>3</sup> For the case of Thebes see A. BOUD’HORS, *À la recherche des manuscrits coptes de la région thébaine*, in *From Gnostics to Monastics. Studies in Coptic and Early Christianity in Honor of Bentley Layton*, ed. D. BRAKKE - S.J. DAVIS - S. EMMEL, Leuven - Paris, Bristol (CT) 2017, 175-212; EAD., *Copie et circulation des livres dans la région thébaine (VII<sup>e</sup>-VIII<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, in *“Et maintenant ce ne sont plus que village...” Thèbes et sa région aux époques hellénistique, romain et byzantine*, ed. A. DELATTRE, P. HEILPORN, Brussels 2008, 149-161; EAD., *Copyist and Scribe: Two Professions for a Single Man? Palaeographical and Linguistic Observations on Some Practices of the Theban Region According to Coptic Texts from the Seventh and Eighth Centuries*, in *Scribal Repertoires in Egypt from the New Kingdom to the Early Islamic Period*, ed. J. CROMWELL - E. GROSSMAN, Oxford 2017, 274-295.

libraries and their criteria of selection, the tastes and the interests that were behind their formation, but also the evolution in the making of the codex and the professional competences involved<sup>4</sup>. The scant information concerning all these aspects that are provided by well-known 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>-century libraries in fact is even poorer for previous periods.

A better knowledge of this phase of the Coptic book production will contribute to the definitive abandonment of the misleading praxis for using the most famous mediaeval libraries – White Monastery, Monastery of the Archangel Michael (Hamūli), Monastery of Macarius (Scetis) – as a model and a meter on which to measure the entire history of Coptic manuscript tradition.

Moreover, also thanks to recent discoveries due to active archaeological excavations, it appears clearer and clearer that it is possible to talk about a “regionality of the book production”, being the area of Thebes one of the most generous in providing new finds consisting of books, in all possible forms and writing supports, that shed light on the cultural trainings and literary tastes of the inhabitants of urban settlements (such as Jeme) and of a constellation of different forms of ‘monasteries’ (from essential and remote hermitages to well-organized *topoi*).

Whenever possible, therefore, it becomes essential to take into consideration the place(s) where a text was copied and a book was manufactured and stored and has circulated. In this way, cultural orientations and literary tastes in specific areas of Egypt will be singled out, while changes in the manufacture of codices will emerge, in a manuscript tradition that offers the oldest witnesses for the use of codex.

The theme section is articulated in three parts. The first – *Literary culture(s), and book production in Egypt between the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> centuries* – that aims at analyzing different libraries and regional milieus of Late Antique and early Mediaeval Egypt, is opened by an article of Gianfranco Agosti, which deals with the common ground of Greek and Coptic *paideia*, comparing the Late Antique Greek learned poetry with the contemporary Coptic hagiographic production. Then Sofía Torallas Tovar discusses one of the most important bibliographical discoveries of the last years, a papyrus roll containing Athanasius of Alexandria’s *Letter to Dracontius* in Coptic version, that much adds to our knowledge of the cultural activities of early Egyptian Church institutions. The section continues with a contribution of Paola Buzi dedicated to the ancient library of the cathedral of This, consisting of a number of Coptic codices dating to the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century or the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup>, preserved in the Egyptian Museum, Turin, and now the object of a complete re-examination within the activities of the “PATHs” project, with particular attention to ancient restorations and re-writings and the codicological features. The criteria of selection and arrangement of the works of two important Christian libraries of early mediaeval Egypt, that of the Monastery of Apa Shenoute and that of the Monastery of Macarius, which represent different manners of preservation of the Coptic literary tradition, are the object of Tito Orlandi’s contribution. Lastly, the section offers an accurate *status quaestionis* of the reception of John Chrysostom’s homilies dedicated to the Epistle to the Hebrews (Francesco Berio).

The second section – *Coptic Books from the Theban region* – takes its inspiration from the discovery of the three Theban Coptic books of the so-called pit MMA 1152 by Tomasz Górecki and his team<sup>5</sup>, whose provenance is archaeologically well documented, a fact of great importance for a project like “PATHs”, that aims at analysing the Coptic book in strict relation to the geo-archaeological context. The section, however, is opened by a more general and at the same time very accurate overview of the literary manuscripts, in Greek and Coptic, found in Thebes, with a particular attention to their archaeological contexts (Elisabeth R. O’Connell). This is followed by a contribution on one of the most interesting multiple-text manuscripts of the Theban area, *P. Bodmer 58*, as far as the content and the physical aspects are concerned (Anne Boud’hors).

<sup>4</sup> In this respect, the contribution of A. MARAVELA, *Monastic book production in Christian Egypt*, in *Spätantike Bibliotheken. Leben und Lesen in den frühen Klöstern Ägyptens*, ed. H. FROSCHAUER, C.E. RÖMER, Wien 2008, 25-38 is very useful.

<sup>5</sup> T. GÓRECKI, *Sheikh Abd el-Gurna (Hermitage in Tomb 1152). Preliminary Report, 2005*, *Polish Archaeological Mission 22* (2017) 263-274; ID., *Sheikh Abd el-Gurna*, in A. MAJEWSKA, *Seventy Years of Polish Archaeology in Egypt. Catalogue of the Exhibition. Egyptian Museum in Cairo, 21 October - 21 November 2007*, Warsaw 2017, 176-181; ID., ‘It might come in useful’: *Scavenging among the Monks from the Hermitage in MMA 1152*, *Étude et Travaux 27* (2014) 129-150.

Most of the contributions of this section are, therefore dedicated, to the archaeological context of discovery (this is the case of the article written by Tomasz Górecki† and Ewa Wipszycka), to the texts that are transmitted by the codices (Renate Dekker, Alberto Camplani with the collaboration of Federico Contardi, Przemysław Piwowarczyk), to their codicological features (Nathan Carlig), to the liturgical aspects of the historical contexts (Agnes Mihálykó), and to scribal subscriptions (Agostino Soldati).

Lastly, the third sections contain an article by Julian Bogdani that aims at showing how digital humanities, with their broad and diversified tools and methodologies, can contribute to a better knowledge of Late Antiquity, notably of Christian Egyptian manuscript and literary production in its geographical context.

A few days before the conference, we received the sad news of the passing of Mons. Paul Canart, an inspirer and guide for several of the authors of this theme section. He had been invited to take part in the conference as discussant and therefore I find it appropriate and dutiful to celebrate his memory with a brief *ricordo* of his human and scientific qualities by Marilena Maniaci. It is our way to thank him for his extraordinary teachings in the fields of codicology and palaeography.

Paola Buzi

ERC Advanced Grant 2015 Principal Investigator:

«PATHs - Tracking Papyrus and Parchment Paths: an Archaeological Atlas of Coptic Literature.

Literary Texts in their Geographical Context.

Production, Copying, Usage, Dissemination and Storage»

**Athanasius' Letter to Dracontius:  
A Fourth-Century Coptic Translation in a Papyrus Roll (P.Monts.Roca inv. 14)<sup>7</sup>**  
by  
Sofia Torallas Tovar

O. INTRODUCTION

P.Monts.Roca inv. 14 (LDAB 749338)<sup>1</sup> is a magnificent papyrus roll, kept today at the Abbey of Montserrat, Barcelona. Its extent and state of preservation make it one of the highlights in the Roca-Puig collection<sup>2</sup>, and its textual contents – a translation of a large part of Athanasius' *Letter to Dracontius* (CPG 1132) into Sahidic Coptic – is also of considerable interest<sup>3</sup>. The papyrus roll constitutes what is most likely the earliest known fragment of the works of Athanasius, a very early translation into Coptic of his works. It is also a historical artifact, which attests to (among other things) readership, translation practices, and methods of communication between the patriarchate of Alexandria and the communities.

Athanasius addressed the epistle to Dracontius, a Nitrian monk who had been recently nominated bishop of Hermoupolis Parva<sup>4</sup>, and who had apparently fled, refusing to be appointed and separated from the ascetic life, or perhaps in fear of being expelled from office and exiled<sup>5</sup>. The present letter, written to urge Dracontius not to refuse the nomination to the episcopate, was written before Easter (§10), when persecution was expected (§3), and after the mission of Serapion, Ammonius and others to meet emperor Constantius, in 353 CE (mentioned in §7) (Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* IV 9). The letter was sent together with Athanasius' Festal Letter 26, for the Easter of 354<sup>6</sup>, where there is evidence already of clear anxiety about the events to come.

The Montserrat roll contains the earliest known evidence for this epistle, dated six centuries before the earliest surviving codex. Moreover, the Coptic version was previously unknown, and also offers us insight

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<sup>7</sup> I would like to thank the Benedictine community at the Abbey of Montserrat, especially Father Pius Tragan, for their generosity and for allowing me to study this magnificent roll. Since I discovered it, many scholars and friends have helped me in multiple discussions. I want to thank especially Margaret Mitchell (Chicago) and Anne Boud'hors (Paris), Annick Martin (Rennes) and Alberto Camplani (Roma), for their feedback, generosity and support from the beginning of this research project. Also thanks are due to colleagues who have taken the time to help me with different aspects of this project, like Jean Luc Fournet, David Brakke, Alberto Nodar, Wolf-Peter Funk, Paola Buzi, Annette Von Stockhausen, Marco Stroppa, Brent Nongbri, Malcolm Choat, David Nirenberg, and Jaś Elsner. I also thank Lucas Binion for his assistance in polishing the English language.

<sup>1</sup> The LDAB number was kindly provided by Willy Clarysse (Leuven), whom I also thank for his immediate response and assistance. While I was writing the present article, my colleague Brent Nongbri identified a couple of small fragments from the Montserrat roll in the Bodmer library. Tito Orlandi has provided the CMCL number for the Coptic translation of the *Letter to Dracontius*: cc0996. In the PATHs project the unique identifier of the ms. is 1161.

<sup>2</sup> On the origin and acquisition of the Roca-Puig collection see S. TORALLAS TOVAR – K.A. WÖRZ, *To the Origins of Greek Stenography. P.Monts.Roca I*, Barcelona 2006, 15-16; J. GIL – S. TORALLAS TOVAR, *Hadrianus. P.Monts.Roca III*, Barcelona 2010, 15-16; M.T. ORTEGA MONASTERIO, *El Instituto Papiroológico Roca-Puig y el CSIC: ¿Proyecto o realidad?*, in *Palabras bien dichas. Estudios filológicos dedicados al P. Pius-Ramon Tragan*, Montserrat 2011, 57-76.

<sup>3</sup> On the origin and acquisition of the Roca-Puig collection see TORALLAS TOVAR – WÖRZ, *To the Origins of Greek Stenography*, cit., 15-16; GIL – TORALLAS TOVAR, *Hadrianus*, cit., 15-16; ORTEGA MONASTERIO, *El Instituto Papiroológico Roca-Puig*, cit., 57-76.

<sup>4</sup> On the procedure of episcopal appointment, see A. MARTIN, *Athanasie d'Alexandrie et l'église d'Égypte au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Rome 1996, 128; on the case of Dracontius, see esp. 466-468. For Dracontius' resistance, see D. BRÄKKE, *Athanasius and Asceticism*, Baltimore 1995, 80-141, esp. 103, 108-109.

<sup>5</sup> This indeed happened soon after this letter was sent, in 356-7. His place of exile was the desert near 'Clysmā,' i.e. the gulf of Suez (Athanasius, *Hist. Ar.* 75, cf. Hieron. *Vit. Hilar.* 30).

<sup>6</sup> A. MARTIN, *Athanasie d'Alexandrie*, cit., 467. For the text of the letter, see L.-TH. LEFORT, *Lettres festales et pastorales en copte* (CSCO 150, C 19), Louvain 1955, 44-45; A. CAMPLANI, *Atanasio di Alessandria: Lettere Festali. Anonimo: Indice delle Lettere Festali* (LCPM 34), Milano 2003, 456-460.

into the early Greek text, as well as material evidence for the earliest circulation of the Athanasian corpus. In this paper I will briefly refer to some of the main questions that this roll has opened since its identification. I leave deeper discussions in all the issues introduced here for a longer monograph, which will include the full edition and commentary of the text<sup>7</sup>. For the time being, I present here a description of the piece and acquisition information, together with a discussion on its possible origin and a description of the main textual features.

## 1. DESCRIPTION

The Montserrat papyrus roll is kept in a single frame in the papyrus collection at the Abbey of Montserrat, Barcelona. It measures 92 cm wide. The actual preserved height varies from column to column, but averages 12 cm. It features five columns of text on the recto and one on the verso. The top and bottom margins are lost. The reconstructed height would be ca 30 cm, a typical size for papyrus sheets<sup>8</sup>. Only the right hand margin is preserved, and is ca. 4.5 cm wide. The whole roll is composed of five glued pieces, with the *kolleseis* visible at the beginning of the lines of each column, 20 cm from each other, except col. 2, which features a *kollesis* at 15.5 cm from the following one. The column width is variable, being for columns 2-4 of 17 cm, while 5 is much narrower, at 14 cm. wide, perhaps due to bad calculation of the space left until the end of the roll (col. 1 is partly lost, and the remaining part is 8 cm. wide), and for 6, on the verso, 12 cm. The space between columns is 4 cm between 1-2, 3.5 cm between 2-3, 3 cm. between 3-4 and 2.5 cm. between 4-5. The recto is written along the papyrus fibers, and col. 6 on the verso is written on the back of col. 3, in the same direction, across the papyrus fibers. The width of the columns is remarkably large in comparison to other late Roman rolls. This is, however, not uncommon if compared to Festal letters and other such documents, which tend to have much wider columns<sup>9</sup>.

The text of the Montserrat roll presents an irregularly performed pointed majuscule, slightly tilted to the right. There are some elements of cursive, like the ligatures of epsilon iota and alpha iota and double lambda. Not being a pure pointed majuscule, it mixes elements from other styles, as is common in this period. Medium thickness strokes without decoration (except some hooks on the finals of kappa and chi, eventually beta and hysilon) present contrast between narrower and wider letters, being ε and c laterally compressed. The omicron is round, small and raised from the baseline; the beta has triangular bellies, while its first stroke in the shape of an 'L' has a loop in the left lower corner; the mu is performed in three strokes; the alpha has a rounded belly.

The supralinear stroke appears regularly on μ and η, sometimes on ρ (curved), on the η often is shorter and curved, or even also in the shape of a grave accent; there are longer and undulated strokes on combinations of letters, like ημτ; dihaeresis appears on the iota. The apostrophe, appearing in two different shapes (hooked and as a grave accent) is used to mark the end of words ending in consonant: πμϵρτ', ρεζμωτ', μμ', μνκ', πνωβ', εβολ', ντωκ'. There is punctuation in the form of a high dot. There are neither marginal signs nor abbreviations.

As I will explain below, the roll could have belonged to one of the hoards that were sold in the 50s of the twentieth century. Expecting to find some parallels in the Bodmer library, I started my search there<sup>10</sup>. After comparing the hand of our roll to the Bodmer/Chester Beatty materials, I found a very close parallel in Bodmer XXI (Bodmer XXI + Chester Beatty 1389), a papyrus codex containing the Coptic translation

<sup>7</sup> In Mohr Siebeck: *Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum*.

<sup>8</sup> Based on the calculation of the Greek text, the Vorlage of the lost Coptic translation. For the average sizes of papyrus sheets and the anatomy of the scroll, see W. JOHNSON, *Bookrolls and Scribes in Oxyrhynchus*, Toronto 2004, 88-92.

<sup>9</sup> See below and a forthcoming study on the Greek Festal letters preserved on papyrus, by M. STROPPIA, *Lettere festali su papiro*, to appear soon, and M. KONSTANTINIDOU, *Festal Letters: Fragments of a Genre*, in *Proceedings of the XXVIII international congress of Papyrology*, A. NODAR - S. TORALLAS, Barcelona 2019, 144-152.

<sup>10</sup> On the hands of Bodmer and Nag Hammadi, see P. ORSINI, *I papiri Bodmer: scritture e libri*, Adamantius 21 (2015) 60-78. P. ORSINI, *Le scritture dei codici di Nag Hammadi. Il punto di vista paleografico*, in *Oltre la scrittura. Variazioni sul tema per Guglielmo Cavallo*, a cura di D. BIANCONI e L. DEL CORSO (Dossiers byzantins 8), Paris 2008, 95-121.

of Joshua and Tobit, dated between the fourth and fifth century<sup>11</sup>. Kasser, in his edition<sup>12</sup>, attributes it to a professional scribe and dates it to the fourth century. He describes it as “assez irrégulière” but with “une certaine fermeté”. Orsini has described the hand of the Bodmer manuscript as “maiuscola ogivale diritta e inclinata”, and in his study of the Bodmer codices<sup>13</sup>, dated it to the fifth century. It is virtually the only example of this style in the Bodmer and the Nag Hammadi codices<sup>14</sup>. Other parallels, but in Greek, are Cavallo-Maehler 12a to 12c, examples of “upright pointed majuscule”, especially 12a, P.Oxy XI 1352<sup>15</sup>. One more parallel, different in some traits, would be PGM V, P.Lond. 46, a Theban codex also dated to the fourth century<sup>16</sup>.

The paleography of our roll places it at least in the same graphic environment as the codices from the southern area in the fourth century, with the closest example found in Bodmer XXI. It is impossible to tell whether or not the Montserrat roll was found together with the Bodmer library hoard, but it is at least a possibility that can be supported by the material evidence. The Coptic component of the Bodmer Library was studied by Boud’hors<sup>17</sup>. In general, the characteristics of our roll fit nicely in the group of Coptic books belonging to this library. Regarding the language, it is written in Sahidic with some “graphic archaisms” and dialectal traits (see below)<sup>18</sup>, but these traits are also shared with the Nag Hammadi codices. Regarding the contents, the Coptic Bodmer library is composed of Biblical and non-Biblical texts (*Acta Pauli*, the *Apocalypse of Eliah*, and Melito’s *Peri Pascha*)<sup>19</sup>. When looking for a match to our roll, perhaps the closest from the generic point of view is that of the nine rolls added to the list of books from the Bodmer library whose attribution is very doubtful<sup>20</sup>. These have been described as “archival copies of official letters” written by Pachomian abbots. I will refer to these later.

## 2. ORIGIN OF THE ROLL

### 2.1. Acquisition

The origin of this roll, a point at which I have already hinted, is not completely clear. There is no indication in the roll of scribe or possessor. However, two documents from Roca-Puig’s personal papers may contribute to clarifying this matter, or at least give a clue to where and how the roll was purchased. Both documents are handwritten by Father Sylvestre Chauleur, who was Director of the *Institut Copte* in Cairo at that time. Both documents were written in the summer of 1955, when, apparently, Father Chauleur visited the city of Barcelona and delivered the papyri personally to Ramon Roca-Puig. The roll acquired by Roca-Puig in 1955 was later bequeathed to the Abbey of Montserrat together with his whole papyrus collection upon his death in 2001. It is interesting to note that the roll was still rolled up when it arrived into the hands of Roca-Puig, who was probably responsible for opening it up and framing it between glass, as it is still stored today. For the sake of convenience, I give here the text of Chauleur’s letter<sup>21</sup>:

<sup>11</sup> See comparison in plate 3.

<sup>12</sup> R. KASSER, *Papyrus Bodmer XXI. Josué en sahidique*, Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, Cologny-Genève 1963, 12-13.

<sup>13</sup> P. ORSINI, *I papiri Bodmer*, cit., 77. See also P. ORSINI, *La maiuscola ogivale inclinata. Contributo preliminare*, *Scripta. An International Journal of Codicology and Palaeography* 9 (2016) 89-116.

<sup>14</sup> I also find correspondence with some of the Nag Hammadi hands, especially NHC III, VII (second half of the fourth cent.) and XI, with a few differences. The closest one, however, is one of the hands of NHC I (fourth cent.). The Montserrat hand is narrower than NHC VII and XI (these are square), and as stated above a bit tilted to the right. The diacritics are similar to those in the NH codices: straight and rounded supralinear stroke, hooked apostrophe, dihaeresis on the iota.

<sup>15</sup> On the evolution of the hand see E. CRISCI, *La maiuscola ogivale diritta. Origini, tipologie, dislocazioni*, *Scrittura e Civiltà* 9 (1985) 103-145, esp. 112-114.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. E.G. TURNER, *Greek manuscripts of the ancient world*, London 1974, *GMAW* 70 (P.Herm Rees 5) 325 CE.

<sup>17</sup> A. BOUD’HORS *Quelques réflexions sur la cohérence de la composante copte des P.Bodmer*, *Adamantius* 21 (2015) 79-85.

<sup>18</sup> A. BOUD’HORS, *Quelques réflexions*, cit., 79.

<sup>19</sup> A. BOUD’HORS, *Quelques réflexions*, cit., 80-82.

<sup>20</sup> J.-L. FOURNET, *Anatomie d’une bibliothèque de l’Antiquité tardive: l’inventaire, le faciès et la provenance de la ‘Bibliothèque Bodmer’*, *Adamantius* 21 (2015) 8-24, esp. 12.

<sup>21</sup> These two documents attesting the purchase were published entirely in J. GIL - S. TORALLAS TOVAR, *Hadrianus*,

À bord du bateau le 8 août 55  
Mon cher Abbé,

Je dois débarquer à Dunkerque et me rendre de suite à Barcelone ou je compte me trouver le 26 août pour vous parler de ces fameux manuscrits. Je dis fameux parce que je le crois sincèrement. Les pages des psaumes grecs étant vendus, je n'ai pas voulu vous dire: il n'y a rien à faire. Et je me suis mis en chasse avec le Dr Aziz. J'ai trouvé 2 manuscrits magnifiques.

Le 1er: un Codex complet et signé du IIIe environ avec 3 dessins. Deux dessins représentant la croix égyptienne, ce qui signifie la période de transition – IIIe siècle environ et une page avec un dessin bien fait, représentant une femme ou un homme, je ne me souviens plus, tenant une tête, en bas un dragon. A la fin du codex une liste de plusieurs feuillets de noms. Ce codex en papyrus, grec archaïque est contenu dans une couverture (comme celle d'un livre) en peau et 4 morceaux de cuir très petits. À l'intérieur de la peau pour renforcer la couverture se trouve un autre manuscrit qu'il faudra étudier (plus ancien, important). Il provient (ce manuscrit) / du couvent de St Pacôme et lui est certainement contemporain. Vous savez que ce qui était rédigé dans le couvent de St Pacôme était rédigé en grec et non en copte. Le grec étant alors la langue des intellectuels. Serait-il un manuscrit fait par Théodore le disciple de Pacôme? En tout cas je le crois très important.

Le 2e: est un biblos très important également. Il y a 4 colonnes de textes les uns à côté des autres. Je n'ai pas voulu le dérouler (serait-ce un synoptique?) (c'est un rouleau celui-ci) de peur de le briser. Le Dr Aziz a dit qu'il est très très intéressant [Ces manuscrits ont été achetés pour vous après votre requête].

Passons maintenant au coté pratique.

Après réception de votre lettre, devant partir le lendemain, j'ai pu après de grandes difficultés me faire avancer l'argent. Il n'était pas encore arrivé. Aussi la personne que vous connaissez a conservé les 2 manuscrits que j'ai emballés, enfermés dans une boîte en fer, enveloppés de papier etc à votre nom. Dès réception de l'argent, il remettra comme vous l'avez demandé le paquet au P. Remiro, afin de le remettre à la personne qui doit vous le faire parvenir. J'attends donc confirmation – et c'est pour cela que je viens à Barcelone – de la réception de l'argent pour vous dire: voilà votre paquet-

À bientôt, donc, cher Abbé et croyez moi bien à vous in Xos (Christos) P. Sylvester Chaleur

Less than twenty days later Father Roca Puig paid 132.000 pesetas (800Euro) = 1200 LE for both pieces. The first manuscript, the *codex miscellaneus*<sup>22</sup> is a fourth-century papyrus single quire codex, which contained texts in both Latin and Greek. This codex, it has been argued, belonged to the Dishna papers or the Bodmer library, connected to a Pachomian library<sup>23</sup>.

## 2.2. Origin

Although it is largely impossible to trace back pieces bought in the 20<sup>th</sup> century antiquities market, we may at least follow the few clues we have to the possible origins, in the Thebaid, of the roll of Montserrat. On the basis of the acquisition information, one might be tempted to assume that the Athanasius roll came from the same hoard as the *codex miscellaneus*. However, contradicting this assumption is the fact that the letter only mentions the provenance of the codex and does not explicitly connect the two pieces. Taking the aforementioned paleographical arguments into consideration, we may try to find points in common between the Athanasian roll and the 'library' to which the codex allegedly belonged.

24-31, with images in pl. IX-X.

<sup>22</sup> S. TORALLAS TOVAR – K.A. WÖRZ, *To the Origins*, cit., 11-24; J. GIL – S. TORALLAS TOVAR, *Hadrianus*, cit., 17-31; G. NOCCHI MACEDO, *Bilinguisme, digraphisme, multiculturalisme: une étude du Codex Miscellaneus de Montserrat*, in *Bilinguisme et digraphisme dans le monde gréco-romain: l'apport des papyrus latins*, ed. M.-H. MARGANNE – B. ROCHETTE (Papyrologica Leodiensia 2), Liège 2013, 139-167; G. NOCCHI MACEDO, *L'Alceste de Barcelone (P. Monts. Roca inv. 158-161)* (Papyrologica Leodiensia 3), Liège 2014, 26-48.

<sup>23</sup> The *codex miscellaneus* was claimed to belong to the library by James M. ROBINSON already in his article *The Pachomian Monastic Library at the Chester Beatty Library and the Bibliothèque Bodmer*, *Manuscripts of the Middle East 5* (1990-1991) 26-40, esp. 34. See also W. BRASHEAR – W.-P. FUNK – J. M. ROBINSON – R. SMITH, *The Chester Beatty Codex AC. 1390: Mathematical School Exercises in Greek and John 10: 7-13: 38 in Subachmimic*, Louvain-Paris 1990, 3-32. Lowe had observed the paleographical resemblance between the Montserrat codex and Chester Beatty AC1499: see E. A. LOWE, *Codices Latini Antiquiores. A Palaeographical Guide to Latin Manuscripts Prior to the Ninth Century*. Part 12: Supplement, Oxford 1971, no. 1782. Other formal similarities include page set up and codex typography. A. CAMPLANI, *Per un profilo storico-religioso degli ambienti di produzione e fruizione dei Papyri Bodmer: contaminazione dei linguaggi e dialettica delle idee nel contesto del dibattito su dualismo e origenismo*, *Adamantius 21* (2015) 124-125, also observed the coherence in the Christian contents of the *codex miscellaneus* and some of the Bodmer books.

Much has been written about the Bodmer library or the so-called Dishna papers<sup>24</sup>, and I do not intend to reopen the question here. The reconstruction of this 'library' is mostly the work of James M. Robinson, who lists almost 60 items that according to him belonged to this same library. This is what Fournet calls the 'maximalist inventory'<sup>25</sup>. In assembling this list, Robinson did not take into account some important pieces of information such as that provided by R. Kasser: the list of papyri which «ne font pas partie de la grande trouvaille»<sup>26</sup>. Robinson's tendency to overlook acquisition information and base his hypothesis on unreliable informants is one of the critical points of contention within his reconstruction. In my view there is reason to be cautious about drawing conclusions about the Montserrat roll based on an unreliable piece of information in Chauleur's letter<sup>27</sup>.

The attribution of this specific roll to the Bodmer library, together with the text it contains, based on paleographical, dialectal, orthographical, bibliological arguments, or even its acquisition, as we have seen so far, might open new questions about the nature of the library itself<sup>28</sup>. I am aware that the speculations derived from this would lead again to circular arguments, both about the purpose of the roll and about the position a text like the *Letter to Dracontius* might have had within the readership or reading culture of a Christian community or congregation, be it an educational center or a monastic community.

### 2.3. Pbow or Panopolis

As shown above, there are some material aspects that can help us reconstruct and understand the Bodmer library, and thus find a connection between our roll and other pieces in the reconstructed library. A different question is that of its origin<sup>29</sup>. Was this the library of the Pachomian monastery of Pbow, as Robinson claims, or did these books belong to a center of high education, perhaps in Panopolis?<sup>30</sup>

The fact that Chauleur's letter to Roca-Puig mentions the Pachomian monasteries could be used to reinforce the thesis presented by Robinson<sup>31</sup>, but we have to consider the possibility that the introduction of this idea was just a marketing strategy deployed back in the 50s, so I will not force a conclusion on this matter<sup>32</sup>. There is also the issue about the geographical proximity of the supposed origin of the Bodmer

<sup>24</sup> I prefer the name Bodmer Library, because it does not imply a geographical denomination as Dishna. The most recent approach is the monographic section of Adamantius 21 (2015). While this paper was in final production, Brent NONGBRI, *God's Library. The archeology of the Earliest Christian Manuscripts*, New Haven, 2018, appeared, with an extensive study on the acquisition of this hoard(s) and material features of these books.

<sup>25</sup> J.-L. FOURNET, *Anatomie*, cit., 8.

<sup>26</sup> R. KASSER, *Introduction*, in *Bibliotheca Bodmeriana. La collection des Papyrus Bodmer. Manuscrits de textes grecs classiques, grecs et coptes bibliques et de littérature chrétienne, du 2e au 9e siècle* (édité par la Fondation Martin Bodmer par les soins de M. Bircher), München 2000, XXIV, n. 5.

<sup>27</sup> R. KASSER, *Status quaestionis 1988 sulla presunta origine dei cosiddetti Papiri Bodmer*, *Aeg.* 68 (1988) 191-194, collects two contradictory testimonies: the antique dealer who negotiated its sale to M. Bodmer said on his deathbed that they came from Ed-Debba, 5 km. from Nag Hammadi; M. Bodmer's secretary, on the contrary, claimed that they came from Mina or Minia, in the outskirts of Assiut and that the provenance cited by the antique dealer applied only to P.Bodm. 17, from a different lot. Too much speculation, indeed.

<sup>28</sup> A full revision of the proposals for the nature of the Bodmer library is given by J.-L. FOURNET, *Anatomie*, cit., 15-17.

<sup>29</sup> On the proposals, J.-L. FOURNET, *Anatomie*, cit., 17-19.

<sup>30</sup> Contra ROBINSON, see A. BLANCHARD, *Sur le milieu d'origine du papyrus Bodmer de Ménandre*, *CEG* 66 (1991) 211-220; R. CRIBIORE, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*, Princeton-Oxford 2001, 200, and fn. 74, both say that this hoard must have belonged to a Christian school of advanced learning. See also J.-L. FOURNET, *Une éthopée de Caïn dans le codex des Visions de la Fondation Bodmer*, *ZPE* 92 (1992) 253-266. R. KASSER, *Status quaestionis 1988*, cit., 191-194. R. KASSER, *Lazare conté en un Lyco-diospolitain d'aspect fort étrange (Jean 10,7-13,38)*, in *Christianisme d'Égypte* (Cahiers de la bibliothèque copte 9), Louvain 1995, 21-47, esp. 28, n. 37. But see recently: A. PIETERSMA – S. TURNER COMSTOCK, *Two More Pages of Crosby-Schøyen Codex MS 193: A Pachomian Lectionary?*, *BASP* 48 (2011) 27-46.

<sup>31</sup> J.M. ROBINSON, *The Story of the Bodmer Library. From the First Monastery's Library in Upper Egypt to Geneva and Dublin*, Cambridge 2013. R. KASSER, *Introduction* (n. 24), XXI-XXXVII.

<sup>32</sup> In spite of the connection of some texts with Pachomian content, the association of the Bodmer Library with the Pachomian communities is at least an open question, if not, as many think, very dubious. J.-L. FOURNET, *Anatomie*, cit., 12, 16-17. A. CAMPLANI, *Per un profilo*, cit., 127.

library and the Nag Hammadi find, which has been an argument, together with codicological and paleographical criteria, for connecting both libraries and proposing a Pachomian origin to both of them<sup>33</sup>. All arguments are based on hypotheses and analogies that cannot be proven in a definite way.

As I will suggest later, there are dialectal traits that connect our roll to Achmim. This is again a piece of circumstantial evidence, since both books and scribes have mobility, and different dialects are found in the Bodmer library<sup>34</sup>. At the risk of falling into the same kind of hypothesis as those criticized above, I will discuss the possibility of the roll belonging to or stemming from a library in Panopolis or the Panopolitan area. In fact, it is not news that the Bodmer library has also been linked to Panopolis. Turner<sup>35</sup> already advanced the possibility of Panopolitan origin. Some of the Bodmer rolls were copied on Panopolitan administrative documents<sup>36</sup>. Gilliam suggests a Panopolitan origin, but in his opinion the use of Latin in some of the pieces of the library contradicts the possibility of the library having belonged to a monastery<sup>37</sup>. Fournet and Gasco propose new evidence to link the Bodmer library to Dendera, in the Panopolitan nome but very close to Dishna, based on the evidence provided by documents (and the onomastics in these documents) found in the bindings of some of the codices. This evidence also explains the use of Panopolitan administrative documents mentioned above<sup>38</sup>.

If we want to insist on a Panopolitan origin for our roll, it might well belong to another Achmimic library now being studied by Nathan Carlig. Discovered by G. Maspero at the end of the nineteenth century in Achmim, it is a lot now kept mostly in the Bibliothèque nationale de France<sup>39</sup>. They are parts of a few codices and a roll in Achmimic and Sahidic Coptic, which contain biblical and apocryphal texts, and can be dated to the fourth-fifth century<sup>40</sup>. Other pieces in Berlin and Vienna could be part of the same lot<sup>41</sup>. G. Steindorff

<sup>33</sup> Also led mainly by J.M. ROBINSON, *The Nag Hammadi Story*, Vol. 2: *The Publication* (NHMS 86), Leiden-Boston 2014, 1118-1135. Recently reopened by H. LUNDHAUG – L. JENOTT, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices* (STAC 97), Tübingen 2015. For a debate on this see E. WIPSYCKA – P. PIWOWARCZYK, *A Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices?*, *Adamantius* 23 (2017) 432-458.

<sup>34</sup> A. BOUD'HORS, *Quelques réflexions*, cit., 79-80; J.-L. FOURNET, *Anatomie*, cit., 17.

<sup>35</sup> E.G. TURNER, *Greek Papyri: An Introduction*, Princeton 1968, 51-53.

<sup>36</sup> The rolls of the *Iliad* in P.Bodm. 1 (third - fourth cent.) are copied on the verso of a Panopolitan land register (dated to 208/9). See Karolien GEENS, *Panopolis, a Nome Capital in Egypt in the Roman and Byzantine Period (ca. AD 200-600)*, Leuven 2014, 80; L. MIGUÉLEZ CAVERO, *Poems in Context. Greek Poetry in the Egyptian Thebaid 200-600 AD*, Berlin 2008, 221-222. See the codicological argument advanced by J.-L. FOURNET, *Anatomie*, cit., 14.

<sup>37</sup> J. F. GILLIAM, *Some Roman Elements in Roman Egypt*, *Illinois Classical Studies* 3 (1978) 115-131, esp. 128-131: while both Menander and Homer are not out of place in a monastery, Latin is however unexpected. Cf. H.G. EVELYN WHITE, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition. The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes, Part II*, New York 1926, 320-321, for inscriptions on walls of cells with lines of the *Iliad* and Menander's *sententiae*. See also A. STRAMAGLIA, *Fra 'consumo' e 'impegno': usi didattici della narrativa nel mondo antico*, in *La letteratura di consumo nel mondo greco-latino*, a cura di O. PECERE – A. STRAMAGLIA, Cassino 1996, 97-166, esp. 131-135. Other hypotheses propose a Christian secondary school rather than monastic library (see footnote 28). For Latin in Egypt, although no discussion on Latin in a monastery, see J.N. ADAMS, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, Cambridge, 2004, 527-641, esp. on Latin in the army, 599-623.

<sup>38</sup> J.-L. FOURNET, *Anatomie*, cit., 18.

<sup>39</sup> C. LOUIS, *La cachette du monastère Blanc ou l'affaire des papyrus d'Akhmîm*, in *Pages chrétiennes d'Égypte. Les manuscrits des Coptes*, ed. A. BOUD'HORS, Paris 2004, 20-21.

<sup>40</sup> U. BOURIANT, *Les papyrus d'Akhmîm*, in *Mémoires publiés par les membres de la mission archéologique française au Caire*, 1, 2 (1885) 243-304; P. LACAU, *Textes coptes en dialectes achmîmique et sahidique*, *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 8 (1911) 43-109; U. WILCKEN, *Die Achmîm-Papyri in der Bibliothek Nationale zu Paris*, *Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* (1887) 807-820; U. WILCKEN, *XI. P. Bouriant*, *Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete* 8 (1927) 302-308; P. COLLART, *Les papyrus Bouriant*, Paris 1926, 3 and 41a,b; P. COLLART, *Les papyrus grecs d'Achmîm à la Bibliothèque nationale de Paris*, *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 31 (1931) 33-111.

<sup>41</sup> *Die Apokalypse des Elias. Eine unbekannte Apokalypse und Bruchstücke der Sophonias-Apokalypse. Koptische Texte, Übersetzung, Glossar*, ed. G. STEINDORFF, Leipzig 1899. *Der erste Clemensbrief in altkoptischer Übersetzung*, ed. C. SCHMIDT, Leipzig 1908. See A. BOUD'HORS, *10. Livre des Petits Prophètes en copte (achmîmique)*, in *Pages chrétiennes*, cit., 38.

claimed it was the first library of the White Monastery, but without any convincing argument. This hypothesis was adopted by other scholars<sup>42</sup>, but was also rejected later as unlikely for various reasons<sup>43</sup>.

Since all evidence for a safe identification both of the geographical spot and the nature of the 'library' is circumstantial, we will never really know to which hoard the roll of Montserrat belonged. I prefer to remain skeptical. First, the acquisition information is not clear about the link of the roll to the *codex miscellaneus*, which has been connected to the Bodmer library. Another link between the roll and this library is based on paleographical criteria, which can also be explained by proximity or mobility of scribes. The contents of the books have also been used for the reconstruction of libraries and readerships. More than one hoard, however can have been in circulation and up for sale in those years<sup>44</sup>, and at the same time, the fact that books with different content and different date belonged to the same library in Antiquity has to be considered a possibility as well.

Two of the libraries from the Thebaid, Nag Hammadi and the Theban Magical library, tend to be considered separately in isolation, because of the contents of the books in each of them: gnostic Christianity and Magic. On the other hand, nothing speaks against the possibility of mixed book collections, especially if monastic libraries were fed with books contributed by visitors and neophytes. Multiple efforts have been made to use both the material features and the contents of the books presumably belonging to the Bodmer library in order to establish links between them and the type of library that could have owned them. I think that material features, like codicological format, paleography (even contents), can help reconstruct scriptoria or scribal environments as places where books emanate, while libraries are recipients of books from all possible origins, and the interests of readers or just random book collection are very difficult to reconstruct based on acquisition information fifteen centuries later.

#### 4. WHY A ROLL?

Kahle in 1954 said that papyrus or parchment rolls are an extremely rare format in Coptic literature<sup>45</sup>. Years later, in 2015, Buzi and Emmel<sup>46</sup> with more evidence in hand would still say that they are 'oddities'. The Montserrat roll can be added to the short list of examples of these oddities. We need to understand the use of the roll in official communication in Christian circles at this date, in order to attempt an approach toward the readership of the Montserrat Athanasius.

The format of the Montserrat piece is that of a horizontal roll, on papyrus, written from left to right in columns. This format is found in Festal letters, a genre that has recently received more attention, not only regarding its texts and contents, but also its formal and material aspects<sup>47</sup>. Festal letters were circulars sent by the bishop of Alexandria to Christian communities, both churches and monasteries in Egypt, with the main purpose of announcing the date of Easter. Part of the content, however, was homiletical, and was thus read aloud in the congregations. Although Athanasius' *Letter to Dracontius* is not a Festal letter, it was most probably sent together with the Festal letter of 354 (as mentioned above)<sup>48</sup>. The use of a format

<sup>42</sup> T. ORLANDI, *The Library of the Monastery of Saint Shenute at Atripe*, in *Perspectives on Panopolis. An Egyptian Town from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest. Acts from an International Symposium Held in Leiden on 16, 17 and 18 December 1998*, ed. A. EGBERTS, B.P. MUHS, J. VAN DER VLIET, Leiden-Boston-Köln 2002, 211-231, esp. 221-222.

<sup>43</sup> ORLANDI, *The Library*, cit., 223. A. MARTIN - O. PRIMAVERESI, *L'Empédocle de Strasbourg (P.Strasb. gr. inv. 1665-1666). Introduction, édition et commentaire*, Berlin-New York 1999, 43-50 and K. GEENS, *Panopolis*, cit., 77-84.

<sup>44</sup> As J.-L. FOURNET, *Anatomie*, cit., 12, also claims.

<sup>45</sup> P. KAHLE, *Bala'izah: Coptic texts from Deir el-Bala'izah in upper Egypt*, Oxford 1954, 275.

<sup>46</sup> P. BUZI - S. EMMEL, *Coptic Codicology*, in *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies: An Introduction*. COMSt, Hamburg 2015, 137-153, esp. 140.

<sup>47</sup> On Festal letters on papyrus, see A. CAMPLANI - A. MARTIN, *Lettres festales et listes épiscopales dans l'église d'Alexandrie et d'Égypte*, JJP 30 (2000) 7-20; A. CAMPLANI, *Introduzione*, in *Atanasio di Alessandria*, cit., 25-34. G. BASTIANINI - G. CAVALLIO, *Un nuovo frammento di lettera festale (PSI inv. 3779)*, in *I Papiri letterari cristiani. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi in memoria di Mario Naldini*, a cura di G. BASTIANINI - A. CASANOVA (Studi e Testi di Papirologia, N.S. 13), Firenze 2011, 31-45. M. STROPPA, *Lettre festali su papiro* (forthcoming); M. KONSTANTINIDOU, *Festal Letters: Fragments of a Genre*, cit.

<sup>48</sup> The reason for this is difficult to assess. It makes sense that the circulation of Festal letters was taken as an opportunity to circulate other materials.

similar to that of Festal letters may suggest that this text was also meant to be read publicly<sup>49</sup>, featuring a catechetical purpose, on a topic of current urgency, such as the ascetic life *vis à vis* the episcopal life. This theme was live in the mid fourth century because several monastic leaders had refused to be appointed bishops and this brought problems for the ecclesiastical administration of the Patriarch of Alexandria<sup>50</sup>. Festal letters issued in Alexandria in Greek had a standardized format and handwriting. They were written on papyrus rolls, along the papyrus fibers, using considerably wide columns. The handwriting is formal, exclusively with examples of Alexandrian uncial, such as PSI XVI 1576<sup>51</sup>. This formalized style of the letters is imitated with variable dexterity by the local scriptoria that produced the translations into Coptic according to their needs. For that reason, the formality of ÖNB K 10157<sup>52</sup>, for example, is compromised. This translation of Cyril's Festal Letter of 401 into Achmimic Coptic is written on a roll *transversa charta* in a very sloppy hand<sup>53</sup>. This confirms that the translations were not produced in Alexandria, but *in situ* according to the needs of each diocese, and using materials at hand. The roll of Montserrat was also produced locally, but imitating the formality of the documents emanating from the Patriarchate.

Apart from the Festal letters, other kinds of letters were written on rolls. As I mentioned above, a distinctive part of the Bodmer library consists of archival copies of official letters of abbots from the Pachomian monastic order written in Coptic. These are kept today in collections connected to the acquisition of the Bodmer library: Cologne, Chester Beatty, and Bodmer. Robinson's arguments for the assignation of these documents to the Bodmer library are precisely based on this acquisition, under the assumption that the material sold in those years in the antiquities market all came from the same find. Moreover, he then claims that these documents confirm the Pachomian origin of the Bodmer library<sup>54</sup>, something that is clearly a circular argument. The fact that these letters are much later (fourth to seventh centuries) than the date of most of the codices of the library is also counter-evidence to this reconstruction<sup>55</sup>. Since there are not many other examples of rolls in Coptic, regardless of the provenance of the Montserrat roll and the Pachomiana, it is undoubtedly illuminating to compare them.

Two of the Pachomian letters are made of papyrus and written horizontally in wide columns, like the Montserrat roll. The other ones are parchment (probably leftovers from the edges of the skins) and written in *rotulus* format, i.e. in vertical roll format. The two papyrus letters<sup>56</sup> are bibliologically very similar to our roll. Although not written in the same style, one of them, CBL ac.1495, presents similarities in scribal conventions, such as the use of certain diacritics<sup>57</sup>. The other one, CBL ac.1494, is certainly different. The list is as follows<sup>58</sup>:

<sup>49</sup> This would imply that the format used for festal letters, emanating from the offices and scriptoria of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, was imitated by the Upper Egyptian scribes who wrote the Montserrat and other papyrus rolls (see below). On this see A. CAMPLANI - S. TORALLAS TOVAR, *The Material Support of Festal Letters: uses of the roll in Late Antique Egypt* (forthcoming).

<sup>50</sup> See D. BRAKKE, *Athanasius*, cit., 103, 108-109.

<sup>51</sup> G. BASTIANINI - G. CAVALLO, *Un nuovo frammento*, cit., 31-45. The sloping pointed majuscule of P.Oxy. LXXVI 5074 (P. ORSINI, *La maiuscola ogivale*, cit., 101) although a formal hand as well, indicates that this is a later copy of the letter or part of it, not an 'official copy'. See in this M. STROPPA, *L'uso di rotoli per testi cristiani di carattere letterario*, APF 59 (2013) 351, n. 11.

<sup>52</sup> A. CAMPLANI, *La prima lettera festale di Cirillo di Alessandria e la testimonianza di P. Vindob. K 10157*, Aug. 39 (1999) 129-138; A. CAMPLANI - A. MARTIN, *Lettres festales*, cit., 7-20.

<sup>53</sup> Other peculiar examples, though not on rolls, are P.Mon.Epiph. 53, 55, and 77: ostraca with titles or dates, extracted from the Festal letters.

<sup>54</sup> J.M. ROBINSON, *The Story of the Bodmer*, cit. 133-134.

<sup>55</sup> R. KASSER, *Bodmer papyri*, in *The Coptic encyclopedia* 8 A48b-A53b, already doubts that the Pachomian rolls are part of the Bodmer papyri, as does J.-L. FOURNET, *Anatomie*, cit., 12, and B. Nongbri, *God's Library*, cit., 191.

<sup>56</sup> Both by Horsiesis. Described by Tito ORLANDI, *Due rotoli copti papiracei da Dublino (Lettere di Horsiesi)*, in *Proceedings of the Sixteenth International Congress of Papyrology, New York 24-31. July 1980*. ed. R.S. BAGNALL, G.M. BROWNE, A.E. HANSON, L. KOENEN, Chico CA 1981, 499-508.

<sup>57</sup> See above, in the paleographical description.

<sup>58</sup> The "Pachomiana", as in J.-L. FOURNET, *Anatomie*, cit., 23-24. I excluded number 2 in that list, because it is a codex: P.Chester Beatty Ac. 2556: Pachomius, *Letters*, 9a, 9b, 10, 11b (Coptic) (sixth cent.) (TM 108078). Papyrus codex (4 folios). I would date number 6 (CBL ac 1495) earlier than the seventh century.

1. P.Bodm. XXXIX: Pachomius, Letter 11b (Coptic). Unpublished. Parchment roll.
2. P.Chester Beatty Ms. W. 145 = P.Köln IV 174: Pachomius, Letters, 1-3, 7, 10, 11a (Greek) (fourth cent.) (TM 62348). Parchment roll.
3. P.Chester Beatty Ac. 1486: Theodore, Letter 2 (Coptic) (sixth cent.) (TM 108130). Parchment roll.
4. Private German collection. Theodore, Letter 2 (Coptic) (fifth cent.) (TM 107787). Parchment roll.
5. P.Chester Beatty Ac. 1494: Horsiesis, Letter 3 (Coptic) (seventh cent.) (TM 108131). Papyrus roll, horizontal.
6. P.Chester Beatty Ac. 1495: Horsiesis, Letter 4 (Coptic) (seventh cent.) (TM 108132). Papyrus roll, horizontal.
7. P.Köln Ägypt. I 8 = P. Köln Kopt. 2: Pachomius, Letter 8 (Coptic) (fifth sixth cent.) (TM 107777). Parchment roll.
8. P.Köln Ägypt. I 9 = P. Köln Kopt. 1: Pachomius, Letters 10-11a (Coptic) (fifth sixth cent.) (TM 101251). Parchment roll.

Although Christian books in the first centuries of Christianity were far more likely to be codices than rolls<sup>59</sup>, the residual use of the latter acquired a special place in Late Antiquity, indeed less prominent than that of the distribution of literary texts, but clearly with a specific purpose representing a cultural practice. While the rolls for Classical texts were meant for performative oral reading<sup>60</sup>, once they were replaced by the codex in the transition that took place over the first four centuries of our era, their cultural status necessarily had to change. The book-format has important implications as to the purpose of the copy.

The papyrus horizontal roll can be explained within the sociology of oral performance connected to the communication of the Patriarchate of Alexandria. Its purpose was not purely archival, as it was also meant to be read in public, for the edification of a Christian community<sup>61</sup> (in the case of the Pachomiana and the Montserrat roll, judging by the contents, a monastic community).

The two formats –horizontal roll and vertical *rotulus*- might have represented different purposes or might have different prestige. We probably do not have enough evidence from this early period to establish a difference<sup>62</sup>. In fact, the *rotuli* belonging to the Pachomiana mentioned above are not very helpful in this respect. While they present some formality in their handwriting, they are written on what seem to be remains or clippings from the edges of parchment skins, which were often found used for private documents<sup>63</sup>. Only one of them<sup>64</sup> is a series of parchment sheets sewn together to form a ca 90 cm long *rotulus* with a somewhat formal presentation. For this reason it is difficult to tell if these vertical rolls in parchment had some liturgical purpose, as did the much later examples from Byzantine times<sup>65</sup>. The fact that they use marginal materials as a medium might support Choat's<sup>66</sup> claim that they represent a stage in the collection of the letters, previous to the one represented by letters already collected and copied in codices.

<sup>59</sup> For recent and full debates about this, see L. HURTADO, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts Manuscripts and Christian Origins*, Gran Rapids 2006; R.S. BAGNALL, *Early Christian Books in Egypt*, Princeton 2009.

<sup>60</sup> W.A. JOHNSON, *Toward a Sociology of Reading in Classical Antiquity*, *AJPh* 121.4 (2000) 593-627.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. *First Greek Life of Pachomius*, 99: «This text we have just written, we have not written for the sake of writing but as a memorial, as is the case with the letters that holy bishops and fathers have written for edification, ...» (translation A. VEILLEUX, *Pachomian Koinonia*, Kamalazoo (MI) 1980, vol. I, 366).

<sup>62</sup> L. SANTIFALLER, *Über späte Papyrusrollen und frühe Pergamentrollen*, in *Speculum Historiale. Geschichte im Spiegel von Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsdeutung*, ed. C. BAUER, L. BOEHM, M. MÜLLER, Freiburg-München, 1965, 117-133, is the first attempt at listing the evidence in Greek and Latin.

<sup>63</sup> See for example, P. Köln inv. 10213.

<sup>64</sup> No. 2: Chester Beatty W 145, containing the Greek text of a Pachomian letter. Cf. H. QUECKE, *Die Briefe Pachoms. Griechischer Text der Handschrift W. 145 der Chester Beatty Library eingeleitet und herausgegeben* (Textus patristici et liturgici quos edidit Institutum Liturgicum Ratisbonense 11), Regensburg 1975.

<sup>65</sup> For liturgical scrolls, see V. MARINOS, *Liturgical Scrolls*, in *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, ed. V. TSAMAKDA, Leiden 2017, 310-318. There are fragments of some, Sinai, Monastery of St Catharina Sinaiticus MG 87, P. ORSINI, *Manoscritti in maiuscola biblica*, Cassino 2005, 139, says it was produced in Constantinople. See L.W. DALY, *Rotuli: Liturgy Rolls and Formal Documents*, *GRBS* 14.3 (1973) 333-338. See also C. GRASSIEN, *Un nouveau rotulus liturgicus: le P. Vindob. G 26064 + 26091 + 35761*, in *Proceedings of the 24th International Congress of Papyrology*, Helsinki, 1-7 August, 2004, ed. J. FRÖSÉN, T. PUROLA, E. SALMENKIVI (Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum 122:1), Helsinki 2007, 395-406.

<sup>66</sup> M. CHOAT, *Monastic Letter Collections in Late Antique Egypt: Structure, Purpose, and Transmission*, in *Cultures in Contact: Transfer of Knowledge in the Mediterranean Context. Selected Papers*, ed. J.P. MONFERRER-SALA, S. TORALLAS TOVAR, Córdoba-Beirut 2013, 73-90.

## 5. CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE GREEK TEXT

The Greek text of Athanasius' *Letter of to Dracontius* has been recently edited in the volumes of *Athanasius Werke*<sup>67</sup>. The literary corpus of Athanasius has reached us in four different traditions and families of manuscripts (*a, b, x, y*), of which only 'a' and 'b' transmit the text of our letter, in eight different manuscripts. The *b*-tradition, represented by manuscripts DWNV(Z) seems to be the Vorlage for the Coptic text presented in the Montserrat roll. Opitz characterized this tradition as 'antiochenisches Korpus'<sup>68</sup>. It is found in the citations made by Theodoret in *Historia ecclesiastica*<sup>69</sup>, and is also the basis for the Latin and the Syriac translations of Athanasius' works<sup>70</sup>. From the manuscripts in the tradition, which attest the text of the *Letter to Dracontius*, the closest to the Coptic text is W (=Athos Vatopedi Ms. gr. 7), an eleventh century parchment codex, which is one of the earliest manuscripts for Athanasius<sup>71</sup>.

To demonstrate the alignment of the Montserrat text with tradition 'b', I provide below two examples, presenting the Greek text, with the variant in W, and the Coptic translation<sup>72</sup>.

Greek text with variants (W)

9.2 ὡςπερ καὶ ἐπισκόπους πατέρας τέκνων καὶ μοναχοῦς  
ἐξ ὀλοκλήρου γένουσι τυγχάνοντας.

W ἐξ ὀλοκλήρου ἀγνοῦσι τυγχάνοντας.

9.2 καὶ πάλιν εἶδομεν κληρικούς πινῶντας, μοναχοῦς δὲ  
νηστεύοντας.

W καὶ πάλιν εἶδομεν κληρικούς πίνοντας

Coptic text (with translation)

col. 5.14-16 ⲛⲓⲣⲉ ⲛⲉⲓⲣⲉⲥⲓⲟⲩⲟⲥ ἈΓΩⲞⲢⲉ | ⲛⲉⲓⲁⲩⲧ' ⲛⲁⲩⲛⲉ  
ἈΓΩ ⲛⲓⲛⲟⲛἈΧⲟⲥ ἈΓΩⲞⲢⲉ ⲉΥⲧⲐⲐⲐⲛϸ | ⲡⲁⲐⲐⲟⲗ·  
(«just as the bishops who have become fathers of children and the monks who are purified to the extreme»).

col. 5 16-17 ἈΓΩ ⲟⲛ Ἀⲛⲛⲟ ⲉⲒⲒⲒⲒⲒⲒⲟⲥ ⲉϸⲒⲁⲩ ⲛⲟⲛἈΧⲟⲥ Δⲉ  
ⲉϸⲒⲒⲒⲒⲒⲉⲩⲉ·  
(«and again we have seen clerics who drink and monks who fast»).

The Coptic text presents also peculiar differences when compared to the Greek text. There are a few omissions and additions of words or expressions. I will present below the two most relevant examples:

1) In the final paragraph of the letter, Athanasius mentions his envoys to Dracontius. The Greek text has Hierax the presbyter, known in other Athanasian writings<sup>73</sup>, and Maximus the reader, who is otherwise unknown. Where the Greek versions present «Hierax the presbyter and Maximus the reader», the Coptic translation has «Hierax and the other Hierax, the presbyters»:

10.5 τούτου δὲ χάριν προετρεψάμην ἐλθεῖν τοὺς ἀγαπητοὺς ἡμῶν Ἰέρακα τὸν πρεσβύτερον καὶ Μάξιμον τὸν ἀναγνώστην,

col. 6, 7-8 ἱεραξ ἈΓΩ | πκείραξ' νεπρεσβύτερος

2) Most interestingly, there is a whole extra paragraph following a lacuna in the third column of the roll. The text should follow the end of paragraph 5 of the Greek text, since, at the end of column 3, the Coptic text catches up with the Greek text for paragraph 6.1. The new Coptic text is reproduced below as an advance view of the full version to come in the published critical edition:

1 [ ]..ⲙⲉⲉϸ.[  
[ . . . . . ] ⲉⲣⲉⲛⲗⲟῖⲥⲉ[ . . . . . ]ⲛⲓⲣⲉⲧⲏⲥ ⲛⲓⲧ[

<sup>67</sup> *Athanasius Werke*, ed. H.-G. OPITZ, and later H.-C. BRENNECKE - U. HEIL - A. VON STOCKHAUSEN, Berlin 1934-2012. For a study of the textual tradition of Athanasius, see H.-G. OPITZ, *Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung der Schriften des Athanasius* (AKG 23), Berlin-Leipzig 1935, and the introduction to *Athanasius Werke. Zweiter Band. Die "Apologien"*, 8. *Lieferung*, ed. H.C. BRENNECKE - U. HEIL - A. VON STOCKHAUSEN, Berlin-New York 2006, XIII-CXXXVIII.

<sup>68</sup> H.-G. OPITZ, *Untersuchungen*, cit., 190-203.

<sup>69</sup> See *Athanasius Werke*, II.8, ed. H.-C. BRENNECKE - A. VON STOCKHAUSEN, cit., LXXXII.

<sup>70</sup> On this see *Athanasius Werke*, II.8, ed. H.-C. BRENNECKE - A. VON STOCKHAUSEN, cit., LXIX-LXXV. Unfortunately, we do not have a translation of this letter into either of these languages, so we cannot confirm that the other translations would have followed this Greek text for precisely this letter, but it is the most likely hypothesis.

<sup>71</sup> See *Athanasius Werke*, II.8, ed. H.-C. BRENNECKE - A. VON STOCKHAUSEN, cit., LV. I am extremely grateful to Annette von Stockhausen for sending me the scans of the microfilm which have allowed me to confirm the text.

<sup>72</sup> I leave for the final edition a complete list of variants, which sum up to ca 15.

<sup>73</sup> *H. Ar.* 72, 4; *Fug.* 7,4, *Ep. Adolph.* 8.



tory and opening formulaic elements (if such elements ever existed) trimmed off in their transmission<sup>76</sup>. The fact that the formula is preserved and distinctively highlighted by using a different handwriting, more cursive and slightly larger, might be proof that this letter is not archival but still preserves its epistolary characteristics. This ties up with the interpretation of the use of the papyrus roll as book format in Late Antiquity as described above. It is difficult to tell whether the scribe in the farewell formula is the same as the one that wrote the rest of the text. If it is a different one, a further question is whether this is a later addition, and represents a later life of the text.

## 6. THE TRANSLATION

Alberto Camplani has recently outlined<sup>77</sup> some of the main questions regarding translation in the Early Coptic world, such as the social context and selection of texts connected to the needs, liturgies, and linguistic development of the emerging Coptic Christian communities. The specific “type” of translation represented by the Montserrat roll belongs within a wider translation movement, which generated, as its most prominent product, standardized versions of biblical and patristic texts. This cultural mechanism has to be understood in a linguistic background, in which language choice is also a cultural choice<sup>78</sup>, as Greek and Coptic were used side by side in a constantly shifting linguistic milieu in Egypt in which different motivations prompted changes in the balance between these languages in the period of transition in which the Montserrat translation was produced.

A passage in one of the Lives of Pachomius (Bo §189) illustrates the precise circumstances of translation and readership related to the Montserrat roll. Pachomius' successor Theodorus is explaining Athanasius' letter of 367 CE to the monks. He then orders the monks to translate it: «once they had translated it into the Egyptian language, he deposited it in the monastery, in order that it would become their rule»<sup>79</sup>.

As for the Coptic translations of Athanasius, his works were translated into Latin and Syriac, as mentioned above, but also into Coptic. We have a complete translation of the Life of Anthony<sup>80</sup>, different manuscripts for collections of his Festal Letters<sup>81</sup>, and other works of contested attribution<sup>82</sup>.

As we have argued on historical grounds, the text was probably translated in the Thebaid, and not sent in translation from Alexandria. This is confirmed by the fact that the Coptic text of this translation is standard fourth-century Sahidic, with some dialectal deviations typical of the south. Either the scribe was copying a Sahidic translation and inadvertently let some dialectal traits slip in, or he translated himself imperfectly. While I intend to prepare a full analysis for the future publication of this roll, I will describe some of these traits, in order to give an idea of the variants<sup>83</sup>. One finds ⲙⲛⲟ for ⲙⲛⲁϥ, the adverb ‘there’, like in ⲛⲉⲧⲙⲛⲟ (col. 3, 12), but also ⲛⲉⲧⲙⲛⲁϥ (col. 5, 8), as well as ⲛⲟ for the verb ⲛⲁϥ, ‘to see’, in ⲁⲛⲛⲟ (col. 5, lines 12 and 16). This would be frequent only in dialect A (although it may occasionally occur in the Manichaean corpus I4 and in documentary southern Sahidic). The variants ⲩⲁⲣⲡⲓ for ⲩⲟⲣⲡⲓ (col. 3, 18), ⲛⲁⲃⲉ for ⲛⲟⲃⲉ (col. 5, 4) and ⲙⲉϥ for ⲙⲉϥⲉ (col. 4, 4) are also to be noted, as well as the preposition ⲁ for ⲉ (col. 5, 12).

<sup>76</sup> M. CHOAT, *Early Coptic Epistolography*, cit., 173, n. 115.

<sup>77</sup> A. CAMPLANI, *Il copto e la chiesa copta. La lenta e inconclusa affermazione della lingua copta nello spazio pubblico della tarda antichità*, *Atti del I Dies Academicus*, Milano 2015, 129-153. A. CAMPLANI, *Sulla multifunzionalità del tradurre in copto: note sparse su frammenti copti tardoantichi, Cicerone e moderne ipotesi di ricerca*, in *Egitto crocevia di traduzioni*, ed. F. CREVATIN, Trieste 2018, 101-144.

<sup>78</sup> J.-L. FOURNET, *The Multilingual Environment of Late Antique Egypt: Greek, Latin, Coptic, and Persian Documentation*, in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology* ed. R.S. BAGNALL, Oxford 2009, 418-451; S. TORALLAS TOVAR, *Identidad lingüística e Identidad Religiosa en el Egipto Greco-romano*, Barcelona, 2005; S. TORALLAS TOVAR, *Linguistic Identity in Graeco-Roman Egypt*, in *The Multilingual Experience in Egypt, from the Ptolemies to the Abbasids*, ed. A. PAPACONSTANTINOU, Aldershot 2010, 17-43.

<sup>79</sup> S. *Pachomii vita bohairice scripta*, ed. L.Th. LEFORT, (CSCO 89, C 7), Louvain 19532, 175-178, in particular 178.

<sup>80</sup> S. *Antonii Vitae. Versio sahidica*, ed. G. GARITTE (CSCO 117, C 13), Paris-Louvain 1949.

<sup>81</sup> *Lettres festales et pastorales en copte*, ed. L.-Th. LEFORT, cit.

<sup>82</sup> Like the *Canons*, W. RIEDEL - W.E. CRUM, *The Canons of Athanasius of Alexandria. The Arabic and Coptic Versions Edited and Translated with Introductions, Notes and Appendices*, London-Oxford 1904. For a complete list, see CMCL, cc 0089.

<sup>83</sup> I owe much of this to the invaluable help of W.-P. Funk.

Lexical variants with southern flavor are: ρ-μαιζε (col. 5, 12) ‘to be astonished’ for ρ-απιηρε, which in fact is translating the Greek σημεία ποιούντας (9, 2), perhaps ‘to work miracles’; or ρητε for ρε, ‘manner’, in ἄπιρητε (col. 3, 5). The use of ειρε in the adoption of loan words in ατογῆπροκοπται (col. 4, 18) is also to be noted.

The two most striking deviations are the use of the negative causative imperative ἄνιτῶω|πε (col. 3, 9-10) for the regular ἄπῆτρε-, which appears in the same col. 3, 13-14 ἄπῆτρεγυμνογλεγε and 17 ἄπῆτρεφῆτηη. In col. 6, 8, ἴνα χαγαπροτρεπε ἴμοκ translates the Greek ἵνα καὶ ... σε προτρέψωνται. One would expect χε(κααα) εγα-. The tense used here is the absolute future or third future with the coalescing χε in front of it (χαγα-), as normal in dialect A. The redundant use of ἴνα is not surprising. It is even spelled without the hori, which is rare but not impossible (cf. P.Kell.Copt. 50.39).

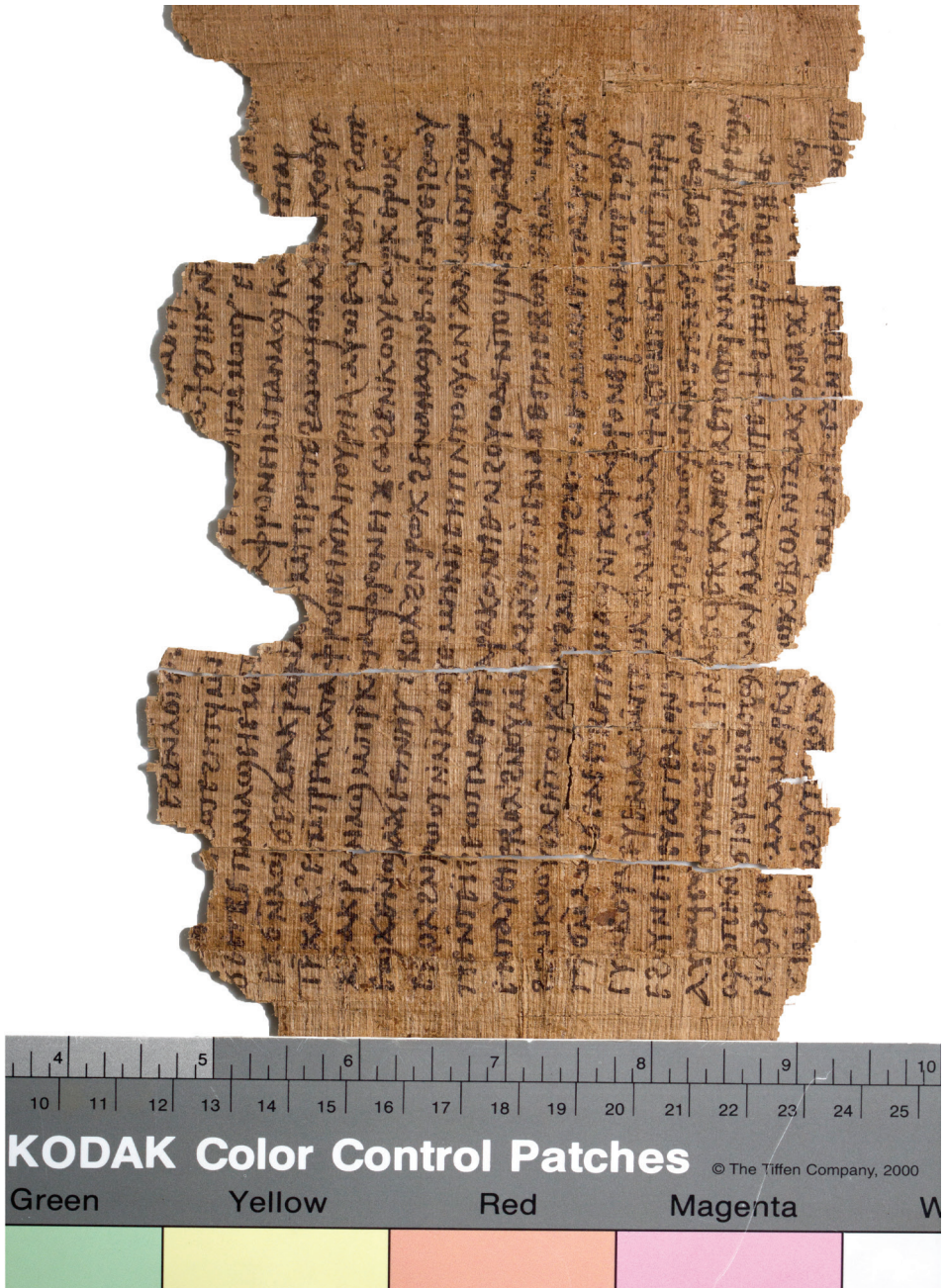
## 7. EPILOGUE

The Montserrat roll is not only the vehicle for a text not heretofore known in its Coptic translation, but also a historical artifact. It was copied at a date very close to the date the *Letter to Dracontius* was produced by Athanasius and perhaps also sent to the dioceses. Many questions are immediately opened about the circumstances of translation, copying and circulation of this roll. I have attempted to present some of these in this paper with the hope of developing them and others in a larger future publication which will include a full edition of this invaluable new Coptic text.

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*Abstract.* P.Monts.Roca inv. 14 (LDAB 749338) is a papyrus scroll containing the Coptic translation of Athanasius’ *Letter to Dracontius* (CPG 1132, CC 0932). The philological significance of this version is here discussed with some examples of variants (including a new paragraph of the text, probably omitted in the whole Greek tradition because of haplography in the archetype). This roll opens also many questions about issues such as communication of the patriarchate of Alexandria in the fourth century with the rest of Christian Egypt, the use of this particular format of manuscript, the translation of official documents.

*Keywords.* Coptic manuscripts. Coptic Rolls. Athanasius of Alexandria, *Letter to Dracontius*. Coptic translations.

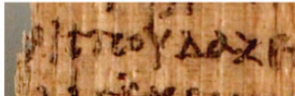
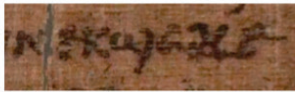
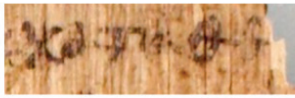


P.Monts.Roca inv. no. 14, Col. 3

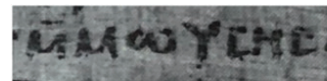
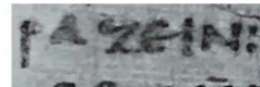
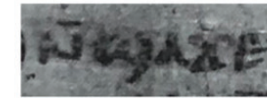
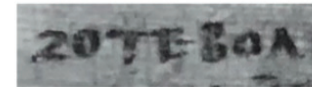


P.Monts.Roca inv. no. 14, Col. 6

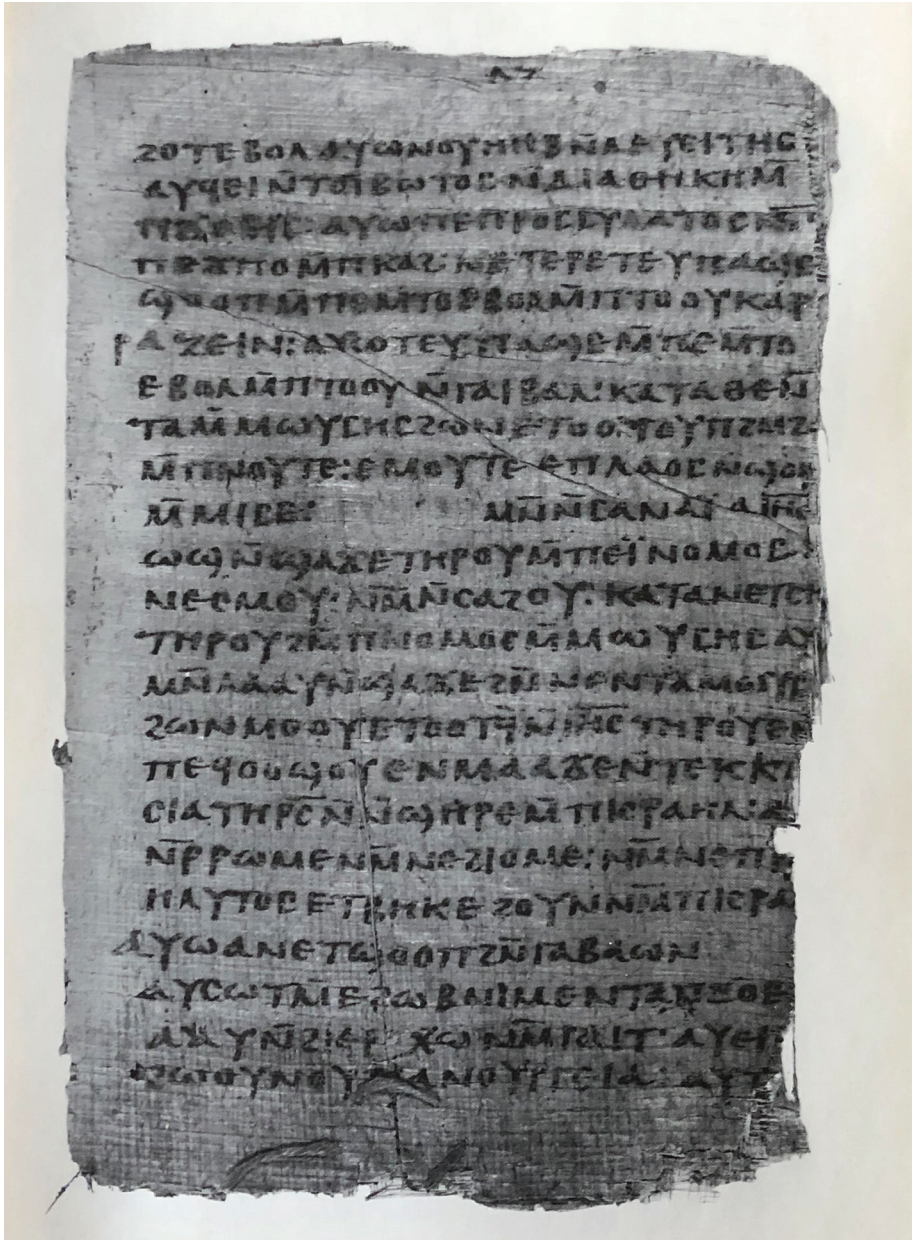
P.Monts.Roca inv. 14



P.Bodmer XXI



Comparison between P.Monts.Roca (color) and P.Bodmer XXI (black and white)



P.Bodmer XXI