Coptic Bohairic liturgical texts relating to Abbā Samuel of Kalamūn and Julius of Akfas∗

[Textos litúrgicos coptos bohaíricos concernientes a Abbā Samuel de Kalamūn y Julius de Akfas]

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

Resumen: La figura de Julius de Akfas como biógrafo de mártires y el papel clave desempeñado por Samuel de Kalamūn en el monasticismo egipcio del siglo VII son de enorme importancia. Con el objetivo de valorar cómo evolucionó la veneración tributada a ambos ofrecemos todos los textos litúrgicos relacionados con ellos acompañados de comentarios a los mismos.

Abstract: The figure of Julius of Akfas as a biographer of the martyrs, as well as the key role played by Samuel of Kalamun in seventh-century Egyptian monasticism are of great importance. In order to evaluate the evolution of the veneration accorded to both we provide all the relevant liturgical texts, along with commentaries on them.


∗The author would like to thank the Bibliothèque Nationale de France for allowing him to publish the first text. Saint Shenouda Society headed by Hany Takla was kind enough to help him in acquiring the microfilm of this text. I would like to thank my colleague Lisa Agaibi for reading my English text and suggesting many ameliorations. Dr. Mayte Penelas made improvements in the earlier draft of the article and my friend Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala was kind enough to attract my attention to some passages. I really appreciate their collaboration and their friendship.
I. Samuel of Kalamūn

Samuel of Kalamūn is one of the most important figures of Egyptian Monasticism in the sixth/seventh centuries. However, there are only a few studies dedicated to this important figure.  

Samuel is not only recognized as founder of the Monastery of Kalamūn but also as an opponent to the Council of Chalcedon and the monothelism of Cyrus. In a previous study I have highlighted the role played by this Monastery in the fifteenth century for the translation of relics. The Monastery was abandoned at the end of the fifteenth or the beginning of the sixteenth century, long before the monastic revival occurred by the end of the nineteenth century. In the present article I shall discuss the Coptic liturgical texts relating to Samuel of Kalamūn. It is important to note that Liturgy reflects the situation of the Church, hence, the liturgical texts relating to Samuel of Kalamūn were written before the destruction of his Monastery, that is, before the fifteenth century or earlier.

1. Doxology I and the manuscript BnF Copte 34

This doxology occurs in the three manuscripts described by Yassa Abd al-Masih and the manuscript Copte 34 from the Bibliothèque Nationale of France.

The Paris codex (“volume en 402 feuillets, le feuillet 351 est blanc, juin 1889”) is made up of several manuscripts bound together, written by more

---


4. Cf. the two hymns commemorating the monks (see Youhanna Nessim Youssef, “Contribution of a Coptic liturgical text to the history of the Egyptian monasticism”, BSAC 41 [2002], pp. 71-76).


than four hands. The contents of the codex are disparate, such as the Psalmodia, the ʿUṣūm, the Rite of the Genuflection, hymns, the Rite of Marriage, the Apocalypse, Canons for the Monks, and so on.

Some texts are written only in Coptic while others are written only in Arabic; sometimes we have a Coptic text followed by a translation.

The pagination is in Coptic cursive letter on the recto of the page starting from fol. 3, and there are two further modern paginations.

Some of the psalms are attributed to Nicodemus,7 which indicates that some parts of the manuscript were written in the seventeenth/eighteenth centuries; furthermore, there is a colophon saying that part of the manuscript was copied in the early seventeenth century.

The following colophon occurs in fol. 342v:

“The Apocalypse and the ninth canon of the miʿtāmānian8 Canons as well as the reading and the margin of the book of the Leviticus from the Pentateuch have been completed and finished by the help of the High God, on the blessed Thursday, the 10th day of the month Babah in the year 1326 EM (=1610 AM) of the pure, joyous, righteous martyrs; let the blessing of their prayers be with us. Amen.”

---

Our text is in fol. 115v.

1.1. Text and Translation

Jesus Christ the truly blessed Son of God gave Charisma to our father Abba Samuel and great favour. He healed all the sick (people) and he cast the devil out by the spreading out of arms before the Good God. Teaching everyone to return and to repent so they might receive forgiveness of their sins from God, who is the lover of mankind. Pray for us, my righteous lord, father Abba Samuel the Confessor, that He...

1.2. Commentary

Even if the manuscript is quite late, it contains several important features. If the doxology of Elijah the Prophet was written before the destruction of the Monastery of Elijah in Scetis, we may assume that there was also a reason for the composition of the doxology of Samuel. The first stanza resembles the conclusion of the Life of Samuel:

Literally “Free speech”.

Coptic Bohairic liturgical texts

• How great are the graces, which came forth from the holy Abba Samuel. Truly our righteous father has found great favour before God, that He should forgive our sins.

This doxology occurs also in three manuscripts used by Yassa Abd al-Masih. The biographical data relating to Samuel of Kalamūn are nearly absent, while the other doxology (Doxology II) mentions his life in Sceitis, his struggle with the magistrianus, his exile to Kalamūn, his captivity by the Barbarians, and his return back. This doxology depicts him only as a miracle performer.

It seems that this doxology was written on the occasion of the consecration of the wall painting of Saint Samuel of Kalamūn in the Keep of the Monastery of Saint Macarius in the sixteenth century. It is possible that only the first stanza was taken from an old text and the other stanza was added later. It is likewise reasonable to think that this doxology was also composed before the destruction of the Monastery of Saint Samuel by the end of the fifteenth century.

2. Doxology II and text

The first edition of the book of the Psalmodia edited by R. Tukhi did not include the doxology of Samuel of Kalamūn for dogmatic reasons. The first Coptic Orthodox edition of the Psalmodia, printed in Alexandria in the year 1908, was to the crédito of Mina al-Baramusi; however, he did not include the doxology of Samuel. The first edition including the doxology of Samuel of Kalamūn is the edition of the Psalmodia by K. Labib printed in Cairo in 1908. This edition was based on the copies of the manuscripts of the

---

15 Rushdi AL-TUKHI, CE 7, pp. 2067b-2068b. The Psalmodia was printed by him in the year 1764.
16 K. LABIB, Al-Absalmudiyya al-sanawiyya al-muqaddasa (Cairo, 1908).
Hail to our father Abba Samuel, the great among the saints, who gained great virtues on the mountain of Scetis

Hail to our father Abba Samuel, who tore the Tome of Leo and confirmed his brethren in the Orthodox faith

Therefore the impious magistrianus persecuted him, and he (Samuel) went to the mountain of Kalamūn with four chosen monks

—Youhanna Nessim Youssef, Patriarch Cyril V and Bishop Isaac of Behnasa and Bani Sueif.
Abba Samuel the Confessor endured the suffering of the persecution and the captivity by the Barbarians

Hail to our father Abba Samuel, who performed miracles and wonders; he healed the sick in the Monastery and in the city of the Barbarians

Hail to our father Abba Samuel, who became a merciful father and good teacher for his children the monks

Hail to our father Abba Samuel, who became exceedingly great in heaven and on earth before God and men

Pray for us, O our father Abba Samuel the Confessor and his children the monks, that He [might forgive our sins].

2.1. Commentary
The author of this doxology has the Life of Samuel before his eyes. He gives brief and concise main features of Samuel’s biography. The text must have been written before the eleventh century in view of the correctness of the Coptic language.

3. Doxology III
There is a Coptic liturgical fragment by Evelyn White; however, it is hard to determine the nature of this text.

4. Doxology IV
This doxology occurs in some manuscripts used by Yassa ‘Abd al-Masih. It occurs also in MS Paris Copte 123, which is described in the catalogue of Delaporte in the following manner:

---


22 L. Delaporte, Catalogue sommaire, p. 84, num 103.
CANONS ET HYMNES (bohãîrique) pour les six premiers mois de l’année.

Ms. de 300 feuillets ; 22 x 17 cm. Daté de 1601 E.M. [1885 ap. J. C.].

Ce manuscrit est coté, au verso, de A à T ; le chiffre RKA est compté deux fois ; SI+ a été oublié.

Titres en arabe. Le nom du mois en titre courant.

Don de la Mission permanente du Caire.

Invent. : Copte 123.

The colophon of the manuscript in fol. 301r reads as follows:

وكان النفران من هذا الكتاب المبارك المسمى
كتاب المرداد في تاسع عشر من شهر برموه
في سنة الف وستمائة واحد للشهدة الأطهار
مركت صلواتهم وطلباهم تكون معنا ومع
كاتب هذه الأحرف إلى الأبد الأبدين امين
والمنهج بهذا الكتاب ريس الدير القمعص صليب
وناقل هذه الأحرف القمعص دمتيروس أحد أولاد
الرهبان بالمعرق ولربنا الشكر دائما أبد الأبدين امين
Coptic Bohairic liturgical texts

“The accomplishment of this blessed book, called the Book of Responses, was on the 19th day of the month Barmudah in the year 1601 of the pure martyrs (= 1885). May the blessing of their prayers and intercessions be with us, and with the scribe of these letters, forever and ever. Amen.

The sponsor of this book is the hegomen Šalib, the abbot of the Monastery, and the copyist of these letters is the hegomen Demetrius, a fellow monk in Al-Muḥarraq [Monastery]. Thanks be to our Lord eternally and forever and ever. Amen.”

Fol. 184v-185r

For verily in truth the mountain of Kalamūn boasted of your true prayers and your great contest

Our holy father, Abba Samuel, the beloved of Christ, the chariot of Israel and His mighty horseman

---

23 14 April (Julian), 26 April (Gregorian).
24 Hegomen Šalib Wahbah was the abbot of the monastery of al-Muḥarraq from 1884 to 1905. Originally from Kom Badr, Sohag, he became a monk in the year 1864 and was ordained in 1870. Cf. AL-Anna Gregorius, Al-Dayr al-Muḥarraq: tāhirju-hu wa-wasfu-hu (Cairo, 1968), pp. 202-204.
26 Read οὐσιονήτου.
27 Read οὐσιονήτου.
God, Jesus Christ rejoices with you. The Lord established you as a horn of salvation, O Confessor. And He made you the archimandrite of the district of Fayoum, you became a law-giver like Moses, who has the book. We eagerly praise you, at all times with David: “Blessed are those who fear the Lord.” Pray [to the Lord for us], my lord the ascetic, Abba Samuel the Confessor, that He may…

4.1. Commentary
The author of this doxology had very little knowledge of the Life of Samuel. He knew that he dwelt in the mountain of Kalamūn in the region of Fayoum. And he knew that Abba Samuel was a monk, archimandrite, and ascetic. In order to fill the biographical gap the author of this doxology used biblical images and quotations, such as the comparison with Moses, the biblical image of the chariot of Israel and the horseman, and the quotation from the book of Psalms.

5. Doxology V
This doxology occurs only in manuscript OR. OCT. 227 from the State Library of Berlin. In the edition of the Psalmodia by K. Labib it is mentioned as dedicated to Saint Pachomius. It only contains a praise of the saint’s virtues without any biographical data.

5.1. Psalms Adam


De Lacy Evans O’Leary, The Difnar (Antiphonarium) of the Coptic Church from the manuscript in the John Rylands library with the fragments of a Difnar recently discovered at the Dér Abî Makâr in the Wadî n-Natrun (London, 1926), I, p. 80.
• *Hail* to Abba Samuel, the *Spirit Bearer*. *Hail* to the leader of the *Community*
• *Hail* to the *Abbot* of the *Monastery* of the Holy Virgin in the mount of Kalamûn
• *Hail* to the *prophet* who was in the desert like John the son of Zachariah
• *Hail* to the *law-giver* and *the fighter* for monasticism like Pachomius
• *Hail* to the one who was meek like Moses *the high-prophet*, who established the *law*
• *Hail* to the one who comforted our *souls* like Antony, the father of the *monks*
• *Hail* to the one who dwelt in the desert like Elijah the *holy prophet*
• *Hail* to the one who remained *pure* from his childhood to his death
• Hail to the one who is adorned by all the *virtues* of the Holy Spirit the *Comforter*
• *Hail* to the one who became worthy to be the *servant* and the wise slave of the Mother of God
• Through his *prayers, Christ* our *Saviour* disperses the enemies of the *Church*
• In order that we find mercy and *influence (parresia)* in front of You *according to Your* great mercy.
• *Through the prayers…*

**Commentary**

This psalm resembles the praise of the Angel.35 The comparison between Samuel and Elijah, Moses, etc., is also found in another text dating from the seventh century: the biography of Severus of Antioch by Athanasius.36

The devotion of Samuel of Kalamûn to the Virgin Mary is well attested in the biography of Samuel. It tells that Samuel left the mount of Naklun on the

---

sixteenth of the month of Mesore, which is the day of the assumption of the Virgin Mary, and an angel appeared to him and promised that the land would be for him. On another occasion, when the brethren started to consecrate the Church in the name of Abba Samuel, Samuel refused by saying “God forbid, rather it is in the name of the God-Bearer!” It seems that Samuel organized a pilgrimage on the feast day of the Virgin Mary and a multitude came to the Monastery.

The Spirit-bearer is mentioned in his Life referring to Abba Macarius the Great. The superior of the Monastery at Balaizah is usually called by this title. It occurs in the documents from the Monastery of Abba Mena, at Wadi Sarga. This title was current in the Fayoum in the ninth century, as it occurs a number of times in colophons of the Pierpont Morgan manuscripts. It seems that this psali was first written in the region of Fayoum, perhaps in Sahidic or Fayoumic, before being ‘translated’ into Bohairic.

“All virtues of the Holy Spirit the Comforter”. According to Cassian, Antony asserted that the seeker cannot expect any one individual to possess all the virtues. Rather on this side of the Second Coming, holy people specialize in different virtues. Some excel at humility, others at generosity… It is important to mention that the virtues of the Spirit differ from a text to another.

It is quiet safe to conclude that this psali was first written in Fayoum as early as the ninth century, when the title Proestos was used for the Abbot, and it was later translated into Bohairic. The author of this psali had first-hand knowledge of the Life of Samuel of Kalamün.

---

39 A. ALCOCK, The Life of Samuel of Kalamün, p. 27:9
40 A. ALCOCK, The Life of Samuel of Kalamün, p. 30:33
5.2. Psali Batos

- The young lion arose in the mountain of Scetis; he gives fear to everyone through his great roaring.
- He woke up and also slept like a young lion; he runs after all his enemies, who fear him.

• O holy tall tree in the mountain of Hermon,\textsuperscript{46} whose branches attained the mountain of Kalamūn

• Who is our father the great Abba Samuel, the mighty lion, who tore the tome of the impious cursed Leo

• You preserved all Dogmas of our fathers the Apostles, and you strengthened them, O our father Abba Samuel

• Adorn us by your life and your holy virtues, O blessed elder the great Abba Samuel

• The almighty God, the Lord, sent his angel before you; he guided you peacefully to the mountain of Kalamūn

• You offered your soul to the loving God by prayer and fasting, which became to you food day and night

• The evil enemy arose against you; the Barbarians took you with them as captive through his (Satan’s?) evil power

• In that country you performed miracles and wonders, O great healer of souls and bodies

• You put in shame Satan and his evil devils through the grace, which is with you and remains forever

• There was great happiness and rejoice in the country of Egypt in the time when Christ caused your return peacefully to your dwelling [manshopi]

• Pray to the Lord for us…

Commentary

The biographical data collected from this psali can be summarised in the following manner:

1. Samuel became a monk in the mountain of Scetis
2. He tore the tome of Leo
3. An angel guided Samuel to Kalamūn
4. He was taken captive by the Barbarians and returned back safely

\textsuperscript{46} Perhaps allusion to Song 4:8.
The other stanzas praise the courage and virtues of Saint Samuel, and highlight his role as a miracle performer. It is important to note that the last stanza mentions the return of Samuel back to his dwelling [manshopi]. This word was used especially in Scetis since the fourth century to refer to the monastic cells, its literal translation being ‘place of dwelling’; in the sixth century it took the meaning of cells accommodating several monks who were disciples of a single father. It is important to mention that the monasteries of Upper Egypt are called monasthrioi, toos, oros, petra but never manshopi.

It is hence safe to conclude that the psali Batos was written in Scetis in order to complete the text of the Antiphonarion. The author did not have first-hand information, so in order to complete his text he added a biblical quotation, praised his virtues as a lion, and stressed his role in Scetis.

6. Antiphonarion II

This Psali occurs in the manuscript “Psalmodia 71” from the Monastery of Abba Pishoi and it is preserved at the State and University Library of Hamburg. This text is a version of the Antiphonarion (Difnar).

The Coptic Psalmodia contains also a stanza in the memento sanctorum (Magma):

• ὅρες ἵππης ἐῳ πᾶχ ἄββα σαμούην πιονοχαυτης
herentos ἀπολλοναίον ἱέτης
Pray for us Abba Samuel the Confessor and Justus and Apollo his disciples, that…

49 P. E. KAHLE, Bala'izah. Coptic texts, pp. 27-29.
The book of the *Order of the Church* edited by the late Bishop Samuel, which is based on several manuscripts, mentions mainly the commemoration of Saint Barbara, Juliana and Paese, and Thecla. It is easy to explain this phenomenon: the Church of St Cyrus and John in Old Cairo changed its name to the church of Saint Barbara after the translation of her relics in the eleventh century.\(^52\) We find, however, only a few stanzas commemorating Saint Samuel:

\[
\text{Xerex ni¶ euoyab apahsi nem uekla nem barabara} \\
\text{Hail to the holy martyrs Apaese and Thecla and Barbara; Hail to our father Abba Samuel the Confessor}^{53}
\]

--- Commentary

This stanza occurs in the manuscript of Alexandria dated 1432 EM (= 1716). It does not reflect any knowledge of the biography of Samuel of Kalamūn. It seems that the author made a compilation of the saints commemorated on that day by grouping them in one stanza.

\[
\text{Penivt EUY abba samoyhl pimenrit} \\
\text{Our father Abba Samuel, the beloved of Christ, the Chariot of Israel}^{54}, and the honoured prophet^{55}
\]

--- Commentary

This stanza is taken from the manuscript of Tanta dated 1584 EM (=1868AD) when the biography was completely lost. This stanza is suitable for the Prophet Samuel of the Old Testament rather than Samuel of Kalamūn.

---


\(^{54}\) Cf. 2 Kings 2:12 (said by Elisha when he saw Elijah going to heaven); cf. also 2 Kings 13:14.

\(^{55}\) S. al-Suryānī, *Kitāb Tadrīb al-Bay’a‘*, p. 263.
In MS Paris Copte 123 there is a special stanza for the Vesper Prayers, fol. 185r-v:

- Truly, blessed are you our holy father Abba Samuel, who fought well truly for the orthodox faith

For the Matin Prayers there is another stanza, fol. 188v:

- Moreover, our father the ascetic Abba Samuel the Confessor fought well for the Orthodox faith

For the Eucharistic Prayers there is another stanza, fol. 189r:

- Let us praise the Lord Christ, with the voices of the psalms, and honour the righteous one and the great, our father Abba Samuel

There is no special psali dedicated to Samuel of Kalamün in the extant Book of Psalms. It is important to mention that many of the psalis of that book were composed by late authors such as Nicodemus, or Hermina or Christodolus. Only one manuscript of the Glorifications contains a

56 Qummus Phlutawus AL-MAQQARI, Kitāb al-Abāliyyāt wa-l-turūḥāt: Wāḥīs wa-Ādam (Cairo, 1913).
58 Youhanna Nessim Youssef, “Recherches d’hymnographie copte (2): Hermina et Christodule”, in Anne BOUD’HORS, Jean GASCOU et Denys VAILLANCOURT (eds.), Études
doxology Adam for Saint Samuel. The first stanza is only praise without any allusion to the life of Samuel.59 The edited book of Glorifications does not contain any hymn to Abba Samuel.60

However, there is a doxology Adam in the late manuscript Paris Copte 123.

Fol. 187v-188r

• Your name became famous in the whole country of Egypt and they honoured you as the Apostles
• They exiled you according to the unity of the heart, till you dwelt in the mount of Kalamon

61 See I.4.
• The place that the Lord God chose for you to dwell in order to stay with your children forever
• You gave your soul for the sake of the confession of the right faith of the holy Trinity
• Blessed are you, our father Abba Samuel, who has sublime fame in the world
• Blessed are you, our father Abba Samuel, who loves Christ with all his heart
• Blessed are you, our father Abba Samuel, pray to Christ for us
• Through … of our father the ascetic Abba Samuel the Confessor, Lord…

There is also one stanza of Paralexis to glorify Abba Samuel in MS Paris Copte 123, fol. 186r:

• ψωυναττε βεν ουμηφεννην πενουχεν ψωυμαλνιασ
  Αββα Σαμουηλ πιονμολογιθθιν
  ιετθοθ

• Truly blessed are you, our holy righteous father Abba Samuel the Confessor, that…

In a late 18th/19th-century manuscript, originally coming from the Monastery of Abba Macarius and currently preserved at the State and University Library of Hamburg, the name of Samuel is mentioned among the great leaders of monasticism, such as Antony and Paul.

• φεταμπσουν ιπνουχεν κενε Σαμουηλ νεν ιουςοιν
  νεν πεναλλονο πουμολοθθιν

• Who blessed our father Abba Samuel, and Justus and Apollo, his disciples\(^6^2\)

---

Conclusion I

The liturgical hymns relating to Samuel of Kalamūn were written between the eighth and fourteenth centuries, when the Monastery lost its great splendor. Perhaps some texts were written for the consecration of the wall painting of this Saint in the Monastery of Abba Macarius in the sixteenth century. The quality of the texts varies; some authors had first-hand information of the Life of Samuel while others contain only praises.

The study of the liturgical text allows us to follow the evolution of the cult of Samuel of Kalamūn as well as the evolution of the language. We can suggest a chronological order of the text as follows:

- Psali Adam Antiphonarion, translated from Sahidic, written c. 9th century.
- Psali Batos Antiphonarion, written directly in Bohairic c. 11th century.
- Doxology II, written in Bohairic and containing many biographical data.
- Doxology III
- Doxology IV reflects a Fayoumic tradition, by highlighting the mountain of Kalamūn and the Fayoum region and ignoring the life of Samuel in Scetis and in the Oasis. It must have been written before the destruction of the Monastery of Samuel in the fifteenth century.
- Doxology I, composed in the Monastery of Abba Macarius for the consecration of the wall painting in the Monastery’s keep c. 16th century.
- Stanzas in the Book of the Church Order c. 17th century.

This article shows once again the significance of the Coptic liturgical texts as witnesses to the development of Coptic monasticism. Despite our fragmentary knowledge of the manuscript tradition, we may suggest that the doxologies and other liturgical texts relating to Saint Samuel were copied up to the fifteenth century or shortly later; when the Monastery was destroyed the copy ceased for a while. With the restoration of the Monastery in the late nineteenth century the liturgical texts reappeared in the manuscripts.
Colophon of MS Paris Copte 123
Doxology Adam of Samuel of Kalamūn, MS Paris Copte 123
Doxology of Samuel, MS Paris Copte 34
II. Julius of Akfahs

Julius of Akfahs is one of the most important contributors to Coptic hagiography. According to many texts, both in Coptic and in Arabic, Julius and his servants helped martyrs write their acts.\(^{63}\)

The Arabic texts\(^{64}\) mention that he was arrested after declaring his faith, tortured, twice killed and miraculously restored, and killed a third time. During the inquest, the Governor of Samannud and Atripe along with 1,500 people were converted to Christianity and martyred. Therefore, he became a martyr in his own right at the beginning of the reign of Constantine.\(^{65}\) This Arabic text was later translated into Ethiopic.\(^{66}\)

Since there are no Coptic texts relevant to the martyrdom of Julius himself—only extracts at the end of texts concerning other martyrdoms—any Coptic text dealing with his martyrdom will be a new and valuable contribution.

---


\(^{65}\) Georg Graft, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, col. «Studi e testi» 118 (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1944), p. 534. In addition to many manuscripts, such as those at the Library of al-Suriani Monastery, and another one in saint Macarius.

1. Manuscript Paris Copte 123
The description of this manuscript is provided above.67

Fol. ḡī ṣ v – ṣī ṣ v

الطَّوْبَة ١١:٢٠

The twenty-first day of Tut, being the commemoration of the Lady
Madonna and Virgin, the Mother of God, to be said what befits
her68 on the eleventh of Ṭubah.
The twenty-second day of Tut, being the martyrdom of Julius of
Akfahs and those (who were martyred) with him, to be said on the
twenty fifth of Bābah Vespers and Matins.”

1.1. Doxology Batos
To be said in the Prayers of Vespers and Matins.

- χερες πηθε ἐτταὶοῦτ ὦ παγίος ἱουλιός πρεσβυγμῷ ἐτακοῆς ἤνθεν ἤτε πηθε
- ἐφές φιλ λυγρά ἐνεπερί ποὺ πνεύμ πνεύμ ἁλανὼς ἵνα φιλα προπρ ἐπέκδον ἵνα * πεκίος
- φιλαδήφες
- ἵνα πηθε ἐνεπερί ἐτακοῆς πνεύμ ἁλανὼς ἵνα * πεκίος
- βασιλεύ ἡμῶν ἀλήθεια ἃς πνεύμ ἁλανὼς ἵνα * πεκίος
- ἤνθε νὴ ἐν ἐνεπερί ἐτακοῆς πνεύμ ἁλανὼς ἵνα * πεκίος
- χέρες πηθε ἐτταὶοῦτ ὦ παγίος ἱουλιός πρεσβυγμῷ ἐτακοῆς ἤνθεν ἤτε πηθε
- ἐφές φιλ λυγρά ἐνεπερί ποὺ πνεύμ πνεύμ ἁλανὼς ἵνα φιλα προπρ ἐπέκδον ἵνα * πεκίος
- φιλαδήφες
- ἵνα πηθε ἐνεπερί ἐτακοῆς πνεύμ ἁλανὼς ἵνα * πεκίος
- βασιλεύ ἡμῶν ἀλήθεια ἃς πνεύμ ἁλανὼς ἵνα * πεκίος
- ἤνθε νὴ ἐν ἐνεπερί ἐτακοῆς πνεύμ ἁλανὼς ἵνα * πεκίος

67 See I.4.
68 As doxologies.
• *Hail to the honoured martyr saint Julius the helper*, who wrote about the struggles of the martyrs
• Therefore his name was *truly* written in the Book of Life with the name of your nephew *[fol. 43r]* and your son Theodore
• And three servants you have chosen and sent *in order to* [give] bread to the saints in the prisons
• *Rightly and truly*, they called you with pleasure the father of the Martyrs and their entrusted servant
• We honour you with gladness, with David, a thousand times: “Blessed is he who attends to a poor (man) and a wretched (one)”
• Pray, *O athlete* Julius from Akfahs in order* [fol. 43v]*

**Commentary**

This text is interesting as it offers several unique features:

— While in the biography of Julius the text reports that he suffered martyrdom along with his sons Theodore and Yuqias, in his icon located in the Church of Abu Seifen (Old Cairo) the two persons with him are unnamed. 69 Likewise, in this text we find a nephew not mentioned elsewhere.
— Whilst in the various versions of the Life of Julius of Akfahs he is reported to have a lot of servants (between 300 and 500), our text here mentions only three.
— The title “Father of the martyrs” is not mentioned elsewhere.
— Psalm 40:2 is not used in the annual lectionary but only during Holy Week for the third hour of Pascha Wednesday. 70

**Footnotes**


Truly you receive honour today among many saints for your success, O great noble Saint Julius of Akfahs. Caring about the saints of the Lord and being their servant, you wrote their acts and kept them in your house. Therefore, you left your servants in the courts an account of the pains of the holy martyrs of Christ * [fol. 44r] For also this is your demand, O chosen saint Julius, when you received the blessing of the saints, to be counted in their company. At the end you also became a martyr together with all your servants. All those whose blessings you received came up to you singing before you, proclaiming and saying:

---

• Welcome to us* [fol. 44v] today, O you who cared about our bodies, come, rejoice with us in the life that remains forever
• Pray O athlete Julius

Commentary

This text offers some important features:

― The text stresses that Julius took care of the saints and wrote their lives.
― Whilst in most of the Coptic martyrdoms we find Julius in person next to the martyr, our text here mentions that he left his servants in the courts.
― In the Arabic and the Ethiopic lives the martyrs blessed him and prophesied that he would be a martyr. In this text we find Julius asking to become martyr.
― The procession of the martyrs welcoming Julius in Heaven is absent from all other texts

= “A Doxology Adam to Julius”

---

72 Sic, read τεκμέτκογεί.
73 Sic, read ἐκεῖσεβεκέν.
74 Sic, read πιάγος.
75 Sic, read either ἐν τῆς ἁγίας ἁγίων ἁγίων "and the holy martyr" or ἐν τῶν ἁγίων "of the holy martyrs".
Hail to the martyr saint Julius, you followed God since your childhood
You disdained all the glory of this world for your love to His name
He (God) granted you gifts and favours on the whole earth*
And in heaven He will show you also to His Father and the Holy Spirit
O combatant of the pity, O chosen fighter for the righteousness
O noble athlete saint Julius, the scribe of the holy martyrs
O that to whom the Lord granted the salvation and the healing of the sick
O that whose name became famous in all countries* because of the numerous graces you perform
Many people come to your church, rejoicing in it at your commemoration
Hail Julius, the beloved of Christ, the chosen martyr who has attained great wonders

---

76 Sic, read meta.
77 Sic, read eromot.
78 Sic, read fhetaw ran.
• Blessed are you, O saint Julius, for you received the crown that lasts forever
• Through...

Commentary
This doxology starts with generic qualifications that can apply to any saint and does not add to our knowledge of the biography of Julius.

However, the second part of the doxology is very important as it shows that there was a pilgrimage centre visited by many people. The centre had a church, which might be the one that was consecrated on the 25th Babah as mentioned in the Synaxarium. However, neither the Synaxarium nor the doxology specify where this church was located.

• And also Adam for Julius

Ephesus, Rome, Antioch and Alexandria * of Egypt the fourth sea
• Your name was famed in all of them, O saint Julius, the helper from Akfahs
• For you buried the bodies of the martyrs, their blessing came upon you up to the third generation
• By the end of all, they took your head and you bore the crown of the martyrdom
• Through…
Commentary

This hymn is also published in the Book of Glorifications. The first stanza was dedicated to Julius of Rome.

"And also Adam for the martyrs who were with him"

- Great are the struggles and the tortures [that] the company of the martyrs endured
- The kings and the rulers were compelling them because of the name of Christ
- They did not cease (despair) but endured, fighting for my Lord Jesus
- Therefore, God helped them, and saved them from all their distresses
- He prepared thrones and imperishable crowns for them so that they rejoice with Him in His kingdom
- Through the …*

79 Atallah Arsenius al-Muharraqi, παῦλος ἢσσην ἡγουμένη τοῦ Κυρίου Ἐλπισιονόμος: Πίστις ἢσσην ἡγουμένη (The book of the holy glorifications of the Virgin, the angels, the apostles, the martyrs and the saints) (Cairo, 1972), pp. 341-342.
80 Cf. Youhanna Nessim Youssef, “Une relecture des glorifications coptes”.
Commentary
The text here does not have any specific feature related to Julius of Akfahs; it could apply to any martyr.

Hail to the great among the martyrs Julius and his noble sons for they buried the martyrs and wrote their sufferings and their tortures

Commentary
Despite the shortness of this text, it contains the two most important elements in the life of Julius of Akfahs, that is, the burial of the martyrs and the writing of their acts.

Assemble [you] all people who love God Jesus Christ in order to honour this martyr and the noble contender

Commentary
The text here does not have any specific feature related to Julius of Akfahs; it could apply to any martyr. However, it is important to note that the fact of “assemble all people” denotes a pilgrimage centre.

= “Canon for the Prayers of Vespers and Matins”
O Orthodox brethren, come all in order to praise Christ, the everlasting Creator, the true Son of God, and to sing well for the honour of the athlete, the holy mighty Julius.

Commentary
This text puts the emphasis on the Orthodox brethren that will come to the ‘church’. This could be an indicator that the church of Julius was later than the Council of Chalcedon.

Let us praise Christ our God, O Orthodox sons, in order to honour in the same manner the martyr Julius.

Commentary: See above.

2. Other Texts
2.1. ‘The Antiphonarion’

De Lacy O’Leary, The Difnar of the Coptic Church, I, p.20.

Sic, read ewqoèi.
The saint Julius the martyr and the helper was from Akfahs.
He was listening to the law and did many wonderful acts.
He did not deny Christ, but followed Him. He was flogged and killed by the sword.
He donned the new man, whom the Lord created according to His image.
The saint Julius inherited the heavenly good [things].
He received the crown of martyrdom together with his beloved son and his brother.
And five hundred servants became martyrs; they were beheaded by the edge of the sword.
They accomplished their service according to the will of God, by having written the struggles of the martyrs.
Therefore, Christ wrote their holy names and the names of their master in His kingdom.
Let these martyrs rejoice for they received the promises of God the Father.
They disdain this short time and they won the life remaining forever.
Through the prayers...
The book of the Order of the Church, according to the manuscript of the Coptic Patriarchate Cairo 73 Liturgy, mentions several hymns to Julius. We shall present them according to the edition of Samuel al-Suryānī.

2.2. ‘Doxology Batos for the Prayers of Vespers and Matins’

1. Ληθάποι σαρκωτάν ξενίαν ευσεβώς εξακολουθίαν κατά την θεών ημίν λαμπάλων του χάριτος ζητήσεως
2. Χεὶς Νεκροί εὐσεβώς εὐσεβώς ἐκτός τῆς ζωῆς ἐν εὐσεβίᾳ ἐν κοινώτητι ἔνθα ἢν ζωήν ἤμεν
3. Εἰς τὸν δικαίωμαν ἐν Χριστῷ ἐν θεών ἡμῖν ἑξακολουθίαν τοῦτο εὐσεβῶς διεστικήσαν
4. Θεῷ μὴ εἰς τὴν ἀκολογικήν πολυτελίαν τοῦτο εὐσεβῶς κατά την θεάν εὐσεβίαν

The blessings of the saints became manifest in you, saint Julius the helper, the man of Akfahs.

Because of the pains you received with the holy martyrs, their blessing multiplied upon you until the third generation.

Hence you carried the imperishable crown of martyrdom with your son and your brother and five hundred servants of yours.

How numerous are the saints! I am unable to mention them all. They are as many as the ears of corn according to the word of the Scriptures.

Pray, Julius the athlete and martyr and those who are with you in order that He forgive our sins.

83 Marcus Simaika and Yassa ‘Abd al-Masih, Catalogue of the Coptic and Arabic Manuscripts in the Coptic Museum, the Patriarchate, the Principal Churches of Cairo and Alexandria, and the Monasteries of Egypt, Cairo 1942, vol. II, fasc. 1, num. 742, Lit. 73, p. 339, ‘The first part of the ordo of the Church (Rubrics in Arabic). Contains the doxologies, canons hymns and the responses of the Gospels; Coptic. 198 folios; 23 lines, 24x14cm. Some folios restored. Dated on folio 193v, 22 Tubeh, AM 1160’.

2.3. ‘Response for the Gospel’

- Many are the afflictions of the righteous, the Lord will deliver them out of them all. The Lord will guard their bones: not one of them will perish. Alleluia

2.4. ‘Response for the Gospel of the Vesper Prayer’

- The blessed Julius, the great martyr, he buried the bodies of the martyrs and wrote all their acts
- He and his servants and his sons and his brothers served the martyrs and received their blessings
- Hail to you Julius, the great perfect man, for you buried the saints and you became one of the martyrs

2.5. ‘Glorification’

A hymn to be said during the Glorifications and the Eucharist
Beautiful is the Church, beautiful are the people who know him, beautiful is the icon of this martyr saint Julius

I will move my humble tongue speaking to convey to everyone on the earth about the honour of saint Julius

David, the psalmist and king, arises and comes in our midst today in order to tell of the honour of this martyr saint Julius

With understanding and wisdom, he was hoping to get providence, safety and salvation in front of the Lord in His presence

Crying and saying: I am a Christian, believing in my Lord Jesus Christ, the true Son of God

Pray... O athlete martyr saint Julius and those who were with him in order...

Commentary

In the book of Glorifications the first stanza reads as follows:

πρόσαχ πε ηράχλίκα: πρόσαχ πλάοσ ετωρούτρις πρόσαχ παύλην πε πάλην πλάοσ ην

Beautiful is the Church, beautiful are the people who are assembled in her, beautiful is the icon of this martyr saint so and so.\(^85\)

The term “icon” has been rendered according to what was established by G. Godron.\(^86\) The invocation of David the Psalmist is recurrent in Coptic

---

\(^85\) Atallah Asemus al-Munarradi, πε ότε μαρίσσαραν ετί βεραμάρας βασιλικός: παλαιτιαγός ην ην ηπεούρα [The book of the holy glorifications for the Virgin, the angels, the apostles, the martyrs and the saints], p. 173.
hymnology to introduce a quotation of a psalm, which is absent from this text.

2.6. ‘Canon’
To be said for the Prayer of Vespers and Matins according to the tune of Paul.

- *tenermakarizin* `m*ommok v piagios ioylios èe akéep;isi* `nàankolasis eèen fran nIHS pXS* `tenerxvreyin nem dayid èe wtaihoyt* `mpemuo* `mpQS nèe fmoy nte nheuoyab ntaw* • *DOJA* • *KE NIN* • *We praise you, O saint Julius, for you underwent suffering and chastening for Christ's sake. We sing with David: “Precious before the Lord is the death of His saints”* • *Glory* • *Now now*

Commentary
The word Canon in Coptic tradition has more than one meaning. It means a type of hymn that should be recited by two choirs, which is the case here. It means also the “canon-law” or codified law governing a church; thus, there are the Apostolic Canons and the Ecclesiastical Canons of the Apostles. It also means a punishment as introduced by a spiritual father, which consists of further prayers or fasting. A canon also means a spiritual plan, especially for a monk.

2.7. ‘The response for the Matins Gospel’

The martyrs of Christ had prophesised for you that you and those who are with you would become martyrs. Assemble, loving Jesus Christ, all you people in order to honour this martyr and brave noble.

Commentary
The first stanza reflects the beginning of the biography of Julius, whereas the second stanza is a very generic one, applicable to any martyr.

2.8. ‘Response to the Gospel of the Liturgy’
Therefore, Jesus Christ chose you, O saint Julius, in order to become a martyr for Him. Let us praise Christ with the sons of orthodoxy in such a manner as the martyr Julius.

2.9. ‘Aspasmos’
Hail to Julius the blessed (man), who wrote the biography of the Saints. Imperishable crowns. Hail to you, Julius the great Martyr; hail to the athlete and his brothers and his son.
Commentary

Aspasmos hymn is a variable one, sung at the Prayer of the Kiss of Peace. The third stanza is taken from a manuscript preserved at Saint Antony’s Monastery Red Sea, which dates from 1377 AM (=1661AD). The fourth stanza is taken from the manuscript of Alexandria dated 1432AM (=1716 AD). Both stanzas can apply to any martyr, whereas the first stanza from the Cairo Patriarchate stresses that Julius wrote the biographies of the martyrs.

Conclusion II

As we do not have the Coptic biography of Julius of Akfahs, we may consider that the liturgical texts are unique witnesses of his Coptic biography. Some stanzas are taken from the commemoration of other martyrs while others are specific to Julius. We notice the importance of the biblical quotations, especially from the Psalms, which are the meditation of the monks. These texts do not occur in printed editions of the liturgical texts as their use disappeared owing to the absence of a pilgrimage centre for this saint.

*   *   *

As a general conclusion, the liturgical texts published here show the evolution of the veneration accorded to the saints, as well as the need to write further texts for special events, such as the building of a church or the painting of an icon. The aforementioned evolution does not differ whether the work was done by a monk or by a martyr.
Coptic Bohairic liturgical texts