

A New Piece in the Prosopography Mosaic of the Coptic *Scriptorium* of Toutōn: Pantouleos, Son of Houmise*

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Summary

A photograph taken in the early 1930s during a swift reconnaissance of the Byzantine sector of Tebtynis (Coptic Toutōn) is the only witness of a now lost *dipinto* mentioning a Pantouleos son of Houmise. The man could be the homonymous donor mentioned in the colophon (939/940 CE) of a fragmentary manuscript written in Toutōn and preserved in Viennese *Papyrussammlung*, as well as, perhaps, the owner of a refined shawl kept in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

While the documentary and archaeological evidence is almost totally lacking or still unpublished as yet, a consistent number of literary paratexts attest to the thriving of a sizeable *scriptorium* in Toutōn (Fayyūm) from the ninth to the eleventh century.¹ The oldest extant colophon (Cairo, Coptic Museum, Ham. H 47556 = Depuydt 1993, no. 404, f. 49v = van Lantschoot 1929, no. XII) bears the date of 861/862 (ll. 28–30: περσονος | νινεμαρτυρος | φον, ‘(in) the time of the Martyrs, 578’), whereas the latest instance of a scribal activity in the village is the long-winded Fayyūmic note preserved in a Bohairic miscellaneous manuscript (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Copt. 68, f. 162v).² The note, written in a calligraphic hand that could hardly belong to any context other than a *scriptorium*, also provides a precious clue concerning the main reason of decline of that renowned Coptic cultural centre. Its author, a certain Joseph (ll. 11–13: πιδλαχιςτος νιδι · ιδωσνφ · πψηρη | νιδμακαριος · πιδι παπωστολος · ντογτων | νιδιδι), took refuge in the Scete monastery, having fled from his native region ‘in the time that the churches and the monasteries of the Fayyūm were devastated, (reigning) the son of Isaas, which is called Palhachēm’ (ll. 15–18: ζν νικερος παι ·

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- 1 About Tebtynis during the Islamic period see Björnesjö 1993; a comprehensive sketch of the Coptic *scriptorium* there hosted is provided by Depuydt 1993, CXII–XVI. About the recent excavations of the Byzantine sector see Gallazzi 2010.
- 2 First edited in Quatremère 1808, 243–256, then newly transcribed by Hebbelynck and van Lantschoot 1937, 510–511. A facsimile of the leaf is available in Hyvernat 1888, XV.

ΝΤΑΥΣΕΜΖΕΜ³ ΝΝΕΚΛΗ|CΙΑ · ΑΖΑ ΜΩΝΑΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ · ΝΤΕ ΠΙΙΑΜ · ΕΤΕ ΠΩΗΡΕ | ΝΙCΑΑC
 ΠΕ · ΠΕΤΟΥΜΟΥΤΕ ΕΡΑΦ ΠΕ · ΧΕ ΠΑΛΖΑ|ΧΗΜ ΠΕ), that is during the persecutions
 against Christians by the sixth Fāṭimid caliph, Al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh (375
 AH/985 CE–411 AH/1021 CE). The note also recalls the earthquake (II. 26–27:
 ΠΚΑΖ · ΚΙΜ · ΝΤΡΑΜΠΕ ΤΑΙ Ω ΝΑΙΑΤΕ · ΖΕΝ ΟΥ|ΝΟC ΝΚΙΜ ΕΦΩ ΝΝΟC · ΕΜΑΤΕ)
 which hit Fayyūm in the summer of 1014 CE (II. 28–29: ΝCΟΥ//ΚΕ//Ν ΜΕCΟΡΗ
 · ΤΩΑΡΠΕ Ν{Ο}ΟΥΝΟΥ ΝΤ|ΟΥΩΗ ΖΗ ΤΜΕΖ //ΥΧ ΝΡΑΜΠΕ Ν// ΔΙΟΚ(ΛΗΤΙΑΝ)ΟC).

With the usual subtlety, Leo Depuydt highlighted the undeniable stylistic affinity between the illuminations on the frontispieces of some manuscripts from Toutōn and the (now lost) paintings photographed during the episodic explorations of the Byzantine sector of Tebtynis by Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt in 1899/1900, and by Carlo Anti and Gilberto Bagnani during the 1930s.⁴ It seems plausible that the *scriptorium* was located in the vicinity of the ecclesiastical buildings adorned by those paintings, usually dated to the ninth century. The dating is supported by the previously mentioned dated manuscripts with similar drawings and by some Coptic and Arabic epigraphic evidence on the walls of the now destroyed decorated spaces. Among the inscriptions transcribed by Grenfell and Hunt in the so-called ‘Crum Notebook 67’, that of Papas son of Markouri stands out for its dating to 953 and for its formulary, close to the phrasing we find in the contemporary colophons written by copyists from Toutōn.⁵ Only thirteen years earlier, the scribe named

3 Quatremère 1808, 249–250, n. 1, refraining from its translation, admits ‘J’ignore absolument ce que veut dire CEMZEM. Peut-être ce mot est-il corrompu. Je laisse à de plus savans que moi le soin de corriger ou d’expliquer ce passage. M. de Sacy pense qu’il faut lire ZEMZEM, qu’il fait correspondre au verbe Memphitique ƆEMƆOM ou ƆEMƆEM, *confringere*’. Hebbelynck and van Lantschoot 1937, 511, reasonably, though doubtfully, render ‘in tempore illo quo ecclesiae, immo monasteria diruta (?) sunt’. An equally hesitant interpretation ‘? devastation’ is provided by Crum 1939, 342a, whilst Jaroslav Černý abstains from any explanation. Although the comparison with the Boḥairic ƆOMƆEM, Fayyūmic ƆAMZEM, may sound fascinating, I wonder if such *hapax* could not be compared with the ancient *škmkm* ‘ein Land radikal verwüsten’, whose Sa‘īdic outcome is ckmkm, reduplicated form of *škm*, surviving in Sa‘īdic ckm / csm, Boḥairic cxm, see Westendorf 2008, 182, cp. also Vychichl 1983, 187a. Perhaps in the writing attested by the Vatican manuscript one could see an aberrant notation (showing reduction ck > c; ʒ pro x, cp. at least Kahle 1954, 128, § 108 (c < cʒ); 143–144, §123c (x < ʒ)) of the usual ‘Wechsel von erfolgter und unterbliebener Aspiration vor betontem bzw. unbetontem Vokal’ affecting reduplicated roots, cp. Steindorff 1951, 28.

4 On the exploration of the Byzantine and Islamic sector of Tebtynis, see at least Boutros 2005, with further literature.

5 On the precious contents of the notebook, see Walters 1989; the inscription is published here, 205: ‘ΠΟC IC ΠΕΧC CΜΟΥ ΑΥΩ ΖΑΡΕΖ ΕΠΩΝΖ ΜΠΕCΑΝ ΠΑΠΑC Υ ΜΑΡΚΟΥΡΙ | ΧΕΝΤΑΦ ΑΦΒΠΡΑΟΥΩ ΜΠΑΡΧΑΓΓΕΛΟC ΖΗΝΕΦΡΙCΕ ΜΜΗΝ ΜΝΟΦ ΧΕΚΑC | ΕΡΕΠΑΟC IC

the holy prophet Šenoute with the holy archangel (ἀρχάγγελος) Gabriel intercede (παρακαλεῖν) with the king Christ on his behalf, so that He may forgive all his sins, which he committed, and enroll his name in the book of life, enumerate him in the number of all his saints, give him a hundredfold requital of his vow in the heavenly Jerusalem, the abode (πόλις) of all righteous (δίκαιος), amen, (so) be it. According to the time of the Holy Martyrs, (year) 656. It was gracefully copied⁸ by me, the humblest deacon Matheos, from the village of Toutōn in Piom.⁷

The transcription of the text provided by Carl Wessely as well as the accurate re-edition by Arnold van Lantschoot suggest that the fragment must have been in a much better state of preservation in the early decades of the twentieth century than it is now. Today, the final portion of the first dozen of lines of the colophon is almost entirely missing, and the area of the lacuna hosts illegitimately a detached scrap clearly not pertaining to the leaf. Thus, we have no choice but to rely on Wessely's readings.

The name of the donor is transcribed as ΠΑΝΑΝ|ΓΩΛΕΟC (ll. 5–6), an aberrant writing which led Stefan Timm to see the name Anatolios in it. Actually, ΠΑΝ{ΑΝ}|ΓΩΛΕΟC has to be interpreted as a *Verschreibung*, through a common dittography caused by the imminence of the *diremptio vocis*, of the quite common ΠΑΝΤΩΛΕΟC.⁹ This personal name occurs sporadically in me-

8 The frequent aberrant Greek verbal form (κε)καλιωγράψατε—see the instances collected by van Lantschoot 1929, II, 123b, cp. also Förster 2002, 369, s.v. καλλιγράφος—is quite oddly interpreted by the Belgian scholar as a misspelling of the *futurum exactum* κεκαλλιγράφεται improperly employed; I would rather be inclined to explain the form as a passive perfect κεκαλλιγράφηται with an inappropriate aoristic sigmatic infix. Conversely, erroneous redoubling of non-perfective forms are not unknown to the Greek of documentary papyri since the Roman period, cp. hybridizations as γεγευσαμένους (P.Oxy. 2990, 6–7; third century CE), συμπεφωνηθείσα (P.Abinn. 60, 10; 346 CE), further instances in Mandilaras 1973, 202, § 423, and Gignac 1981, 243b. The writing is noteworthy from the phonetic point of view for the ω inserted between the two members of the compound: this is not a Coptic mangling—cp. the concurrent correct καλλιηικός in the same text, van Lantschoot 1929, no. LXXXVI—but rather a reflection of a peculiarity of the late Greek. Already the fourth- or fifth-century papyrus BGU III 948, 8 offers the comparative καλιώτερον, a hybrid outcome of the concoction between the classical comparative καλλίων and the post-classical καλύτερος, still attested in many modern Greek dialects.

9 Pantaleon is the name of the widely worshipped martyr of Nicomedia, whose *passio* is also preserved in a fragmentary Coptic version (CC 0293); more generally see Pisani 2015. The Alexandrine Synaxarium commemorates him on 15 *Bābah* (12 October): the tradition oscillates between the variants بیدلايمون and بنتلاون, stoutly printed by René Basset بنتلايمون (Basset 1907, 339 [125]). Such unsteadiness in the form of the name could hint to the presence, at an earlier stage of the textual tradition, of the detail of the miraculous onomastic change from Pantaleon to Pan-teleemon recounted by the Byzantine Sinaxarium. Another Arabic outcome of the

dieval Fayyūm, as evidenced by Fayyūmic Coptic epigraphy.¹⁰ The following word in the colophon is quite damaged; Wessely transcribed it as [... n] nāī[.] (l. 6) and van Lantschoot partially completed with π[ων]nαiω[-]. The beginning would match such names as the Arabic αiωωb or the Greek αiωv/αiωvαc.¹¹ Van Lantschoot interpreted the next word as the name of the ancestor, ρoγμiε,¹² associated with the apposition πeω|χiτ (ll. 7–8), a *Berufsname* corresponding to the Greek βαφεύς. It is worth noting that the same word is juxtaposed to the name of the donor mentioned in a contemporary colophon in MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, copt. 131, f. 39v (copied by the same scribe).¹³ I wonder if the word relics following παν{αν}|τωλεος may be ascribable to his sobriquet, rather than belong to the patronymic of the donor, as van Lantschoot supposed. The note relating to the donor ends with the mention of his ecclesiastical task (l. 8: πeψαλμαΔoc, cantor) and his native village (ll. 9–10: παταλιτ ρεπιπτωω | πιom). The manuscript was offered to the monastery of Apa Shenoute in Atripe, near Sūhāḡ. The final Greek *subscriptio* gives us the date of the copying, the year 656 of the Era of the Martyrs (939/940 CE), and the identity of the scribe, the deacon Matthew from Toutōn.

The main interest of the colophon resides in the mention of the donor Pantōleos, son, if not nephew (as van Lantschoot inferred), of Houmise. The note could not have been the sole attestation of the cantor from Talit. A lavish shawl, fragmentarily preserved at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and dated by Annemarie Stauffer to around the eighth or ninth century, is decorated alongside both fringes by a Coptic writing dwarfed by an Arabic one in floriated Kūfic script:¹⁴

ⲡⲠⲚ ⲛⲉ ⲡⲉⲬⲉ ⲡⲉⲛⲁⲗⲓⲛⲓⲟⲩⲟⲥ ⲉⲛⲟⲩⲧⲓ ⲥⲛⲟⲩ ⲁⲅⲱ ⲃⲱⲓⲑⲓ ⲁⲅⲱ ⲅⲁⲣⲉⲗ ⲉⲓⲡⲱⲛⲁⲗ ⲉⲛⲡⲉⲕⲣⲉⲛⲁⲗ
ⲡⲁⲛⲧⲟⲩⲗⲉⲟⲥ ⲡⲉ?ⲁⲓⲛⲓ??.¹⁵

name could be seen in the بنطلس of P.Cair.Arab. I 43, 5, traced back by the editor to the Greek Παντελής. The vocalism /o/ shown by the Coptic rendering παντωλεος / παντογλεος could directly reflect the ‘Asiatic’ vocalism of the Ancient Greek variant Παντολέων.

10 For the occurrences of the name in Fayyūmic *milieux* see Boud’hors and Calament 2004, 475.

11 Cp. Hasitzka 2007, 8b.

12 The word, literally meaning ‘dies natalis’, is attested as personal name in some Coptic (cp. Hasitzka 2007, 117a) as well as Arabic (هميسة, cp. ad P.Cair.Arab. I 70, 5) documents from Fayyūm. On closer inspection, in such texts the mention of the ancestor is quite poorly attested.

13 Van Lantschoot 1929, II, 38, wonders unnecessarily if the name might correspond to ραⲛⲓⲱⲭⲱⲧ, ‘rope-maker’, whilst Amélineau 1893, 528, more plausibly preferred to see it as a simple nickname.

14 Stauffer 1995, 42.

15 The text is quoted as it has been published in Boud’hors and Calament 2004, 468.

Connecting the embroidering with the colophon of K 351, Boud'hors and Calament cagily supposed its provenance from Toutōn. I am convinced that the uncertain second letter of the patronymic of Pantouleōs can be read as an inaccurately rendered ψ . Thus, the patronymic could be interpreted as $\pi\psi\gamma(\eta\eta)\rho\omicron\gamma\mu\iota\varsigma\iota$.

A further plausible mention of the same individual could be traced down in a still unpublished *dipinto*, sketched on a crumbling wall of Byzantine Toutōn (fig. 1). The wall has since collapsed, and its only extant testimony is a photograph taken between 1930 and 1933 (during the excavations of the archaeological mission of the University of Padua), now kept in the archive of the Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, depository of Mestre (still without inventory number). It is not possible to ascertain if the wall belonged to one of the three ecclesiastical complexes conjectured by Peter Grossmann.¹⁶ The uninterrupted lootings in the abandoned site from the mid-1930s up to the end of the 1980s resulted in a thorough devastation of the Byzantine buildings cursorily explored by the British and Italian missions. However, some palaeographical features, as well as the terse hints given by Gilberto Bagnani about the dating of the archaeological context of what he supposed could have been an ample monastic complex, allow us to locate the inscription in the same period as the Viennese colophon. As one can see, the *dipinto* understandably exhibits a more pronounced Fayyūmic timbre:

ΑΝΑΚ ΠΑΝΤΟΥΛΕΟΣ
 ΠΩΗΝΠΔΙ(Δ)Κ(ΟΝΟΣ) ΡΟΥΜΙΣΙ ΖΑ-
 ΜΗΝ ΞΕΩΩΠΙ ΖΗΠΡΑΝ ΠΝΟΥ-
 ΤΕ ΩΑΡΠΙ ΖΟΒ ΝΗΝ ΖΑΜΗΝ

2. ΠΩΗΝΠΔΙϚ

3. 1. есѡѡπѣ

‘Me, Pantouleos, son of the deacon Houmisi, amen, (so) be it, in the name of God first of all, amen’

With all the caution such identifications require, the correspondence is decisively striking. The devotee donor of the book copied by the deacon Matthew, the owner of the soigné shawl kept in Metropolitan Museum, and the man who had the *dipinto* drawn could be one and the same person.¹⁷ Par-

¹⁶ Grossmann 2005.

¹⁷ *Ad abundantiam*, we cannot but mention the ΔΙΑΚΟΝΟΣ ΡΟΥΜΙΣΙ (l. 9) attested as a witness (μετρε) in the sale deed of two monastic cells (ll. 2–3: τχνητε λι | μπσαλε) preserved in a parchment kept at the British Museum, re-edited by Richter 1999, 85–89 (= KSB III 1413). Nevertheless, the document, whose language shows a distinct Fayyūmic colour, is dated ‘κατα χρονου γρ³’ (l. 12) of the Era of the Martyrs, namely the 986/987 CE, more than forty years after the Viennese colophon. It is thus hardly plausible that this witness was the father of the donor Pantouleos.

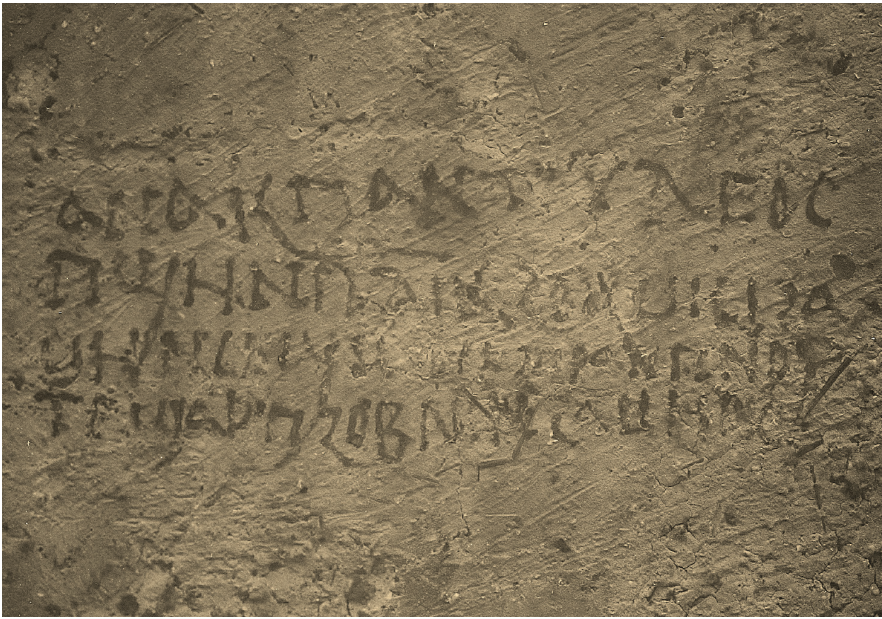


Fig. 1. The *dipinto* from Toutōn (reproduction of the photograph, Mestre, Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti).

ticularly the combination of the colophon with the *dipinto* could represent a paradigmatic case of dovetailing of information provided by written sources into the archaeological context which quite plausibly was the very scene of their copying. A thorough study of the sizable photographic documentation acquired during the albeit desultory reconnaissance of the Byzantine and Islamic quarter of the ancient Tebtynis, scattered in various European and Canadian institutions, could yield an edition of the now lost Coptic and Arabic inscriptions, which, alongside the paintings, possibly adorned the very walls of the renowned *scriptorium* of Toutōn.

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