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Another Athanasius : four Sahidic homilies attributed to St. Athanasius of Alexandria. Introduction, editions, translations

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Citation

Saweros, I. K. I. (2016, November 9). *Another Athanasius : four Sahidic homilies attributed to St. Athanasius of Alexandria. Introduction, editions, translations*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/44031>

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Issue Date: 2016-11-09

Literary Analysis

In this chapter, I intend to give a summary of the contents of each homily edited in this dissertation and the messages that their authors tried to convey. I will try to divide each homily into textual units and look for the textual sources that may have influenced them. This chapter also examines the standard of the literary preaching of the homilies and investigates the elements that the authors used to shape their homilies in this particular way such as storytelling and Biblical quotations.

On Michael and Gabriel, the Archangels.

The title calls this work $\sigma\upsilon\epsilon\rho\kappa\omega\mu\iota\omicron\nu$, 'an encomium', a laudatory speech. This literary genre, related to the biography, has ancient roots in classical Greek literature. In Christian Egypt, the encomium became a very common genre quite soon due to the rise of the cult of the saints.¹ In an encomium, the author is aware that his audience already has heard something about the figure that he honours. The main character of the encomium receives all kinds of praise and, in certain cases, the author cannot avoid exaggeration in order to make sure that at least part of his spiritual message is well delivered to his audience.² Thus, such historical nuggets of information that one may find in encomia should be considered with due care and compared with other historical sources. In our case, the archangels Michael and Gabriel, are presented as a supreme examples of sanctity. By explaining their sanctity, the author urges his audience to purify themselves in

¹ See, for example, G. Garitte, "Panegyrique de saint Antoine par Jean, évêque d'Hermopolis", *OCP* 9, 1943, p. 100-134, 330-365; T. Orlandi, *Studi Copti. 1. Un encomio di Marco Evangelista. 2. Le fonti copte della Storia dei Patriarchi di Alessandria. 3. La leggenda di S. Mercurio*, Milan, 1968, p. 12-52; D. W. Johnson, *Panegyric on Macarius Bishop of Tkôw Attributed to Dioscorus of Alexandria*, 2 vols. CSCO 415-416, *Scriptores coptici* 41-42, Louvain, 1980.

² T. Hägg and Ph. Rousseau, "Introduction: Biography and Panegyric", in T. Hägg and Ph. Rousseau (eds.), *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity*, Berkeley, 2001, p. 3-5.

order to receive the blessings of the angels and to present their offerings at their shrines.³

The title of the encomium states that the author is "the son of the Apostles, the holy Apa Athanasius, the archbishop of Alexandria". In most of the writings attributed to Athanasius in Sahidic, he receives the same titles and epithets like 'the man who bears Christ' or 'the man who is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit'.⁴ Athanasius also gets the title 'Pope' in the text of this homily (§25).

In her study of the titles of Coptic literary works, P. Buzi classifies them according to their size. The size of the title of *On Michael and Gabriel, the Archangels* is the one usually found in the Sahidic writings attributed to Athanasius. These titles are characterized by one or more element whose function is to fix the subject of the title in time and space, naming the occasion for which the work was created, and specifying the place where it was to be read. Buzi called this kind of titles 'extended simple structure titles'⁵ and they are very common in the al-Hamuli find.

This present encomium was composed in honour of the two archangels, Michael and Gabriel. Both of them have many feasts in the Coptic calendar. The Coptic church celebrates Michael on the twelfth day of every month, especially on the twelfth of Hator

³ For this part of my research, I made use of J. Leemans' introductory essay in Leemans et al., *'Let us die that we may live': Greek homilies on Christian Martyrs from Asia Minor, Palestine and Syria (c. AD 350-AD 450)*, London, 2003, p. 38-47.

⁴ See, for example, the second homily of this dissertation (title) and F. J. Martinez, *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic in the Early Muslim Period: Pseudo-Methodius and Pseudo-Athanasius*, Washington, 1985, p. 285; and J. B. Bernardin, "The Resurrection of Lazarus", *AJSLL* 57.3, 1940, p. 278.

⁵ P. Buzi, *Titoli e autori nella tradizione Copta: studio storico e tipologico*, Pisa, 2005, pp. 107-8; P. Buzi, "Titles in the Coptic manuscript Tradition: Complex Structure Titles and Extended Structure Titles", in M. Immerzeel and J. van der Vliet (eds.), *Coptic Studies on the Threshold of a New Millennium: Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Coptic Studies*, Louvain, 2004, p. 309-316.

and Bauna.⁶ Gabriel has feasts on the 22nd of Kyiahk, the 26th of Bauna and the 30th of Baramhat and perhaps on the thirteenth of every month.⁷ The text of the encomium shows that it is to be delivered on the feast of the twelfth of Hator since that date is mentioned as the date when the miracles, which the author narrates, happened (§14 and 19). The place of delivering the encomium must be one of the shrines of the archangels, since these are mentioned in the title and throughout the encomium as a sacred place where Michael and Gabriel do justice to the oppressed (§16, 18 and 34). It is not clear from the text where exactly the shrines meant in the homily were situated.

Following the title, the author starts with a short prologue by which he tries to attract the attention of his audience. Such prologues are also common in Coptic homilies. The author informs his audience that he is going to speak about the miracles of God and how He saves them by granting the flood of the Nile (§1).

Then he moves to his first theme which are warnings against fornication (§2-5). The author persuades his audience that fornication is a grave sin. In the past, fornicators used to die instantly, but in the present days, if one repents, one may be saved. In this first part of the encomium, the author intends to scare his listeners by giving examples, quoted from the Holy Scripture, of the thousands of people who died because of adultery (§6-8). While speaking about fornication, he incidentally objects to offending God by complaining that He gives the just and the unjust alike, just like a potter makes special and common pots from the same clay.⁸ Indeed, God is righteous, but it is man who makes the wrong choices.

⁶ C. D. G. Müller, *Die Engellehre der Koptischen Kirche*, Wiesbaden, 1959, p. 12.

⁷ C. D. G. Müller, *Die Engellehre*, p. 38.

⁸ Rom. 9: 22-21.

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In the many Biblical quotations which are used to describe the evil end of fornicators, the author adopts a historical order starting from the book of Numbers, then Judges and so on. It seems that the author quotes the Biblical verses from his own memory, not from a written Bible, as he mixes up some of the Biblical events. For instance, the author refers to the death of three thousand men due to committing adultery, a story unattested as such in the Bible (§7). Probably he confused them with the three thousand people who were killed by Samson.⁹

The next theme is that Michael and Gabriel bless the pure ones and punish the evil ones (§9-12). In this second part of the encomium, the author states that the archangels watch the behaviour of man. Here he gives an indirect message to the listeners, that they should confess their sins and repent, in order that the angels will not reveal their sins. Then Athanasius teaches his audience that fornication causes attachment to the flesh, but the flesh will perish and the impure spirit will be punished. He asks his audience to abstain from intercourse on particular days, then God will bless them during their lifetime, and the angels will intercede in favour of them on the day of judgment.

In support of this theme, Athanasius recounts his first story about George, a follower of Arius, who is depicted as a blasphemer and a persecutor of the church (§13-15). Michael punishes George on his feast day. Through George's story, the audience is taught that Michael can stop the harm of the demons. The angels are the agents of God and have a potential destructive force. Here one can learn how Athanasius was seen among the people of the author's time. He is the hero of the church who defends the faith against the Arians. He is on the right side in the theological debate, thus he receives heavenly support. No word is said about the type of ideas that Athanasius really supported or defended.

⁹ Judg. 16: 27-30.

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The author has a spiritual message which he is keen to deliver. Whatever falls outside of his moral lesson is not his concern.

Then the author embarks upon his second story in which he narrates about the rich man from Pentapolis who cheated a young man and stole a big amount of money from him (§16-20). Here, the audience is told about another major activity of the angels, that they may bring to light sins. The underlying message of the story is: if you have transgressed, repent and confess, for the priests are patient, just as God was patient with the people of Israel after the exodus. If you do not make a confession yourself, the archangels will reveal your sins on their feast day, the day in which this homily is read, so the audience is warned.

Then, the author moves to his third theme which is meant to show that God listens to whoever loves him even when they are pagans. He emphasizes the extreme importance of repentance and give a quick comparison between Christians and pagans and their respective chances to be redeemed (§21-24). In this particular part, the author quotes *The Jewish Antiquities* of Flavius Josephus (c. AD 37-100).¹⁰ Due to the loss of the text in this part, it is difficult to discover why the author quotes these particular passages of Josephus, but it is clear enough that he concentrates on the sufferings that the Jews caused to God. The author, apparently, thinks that pagans are rather closer to redemption than the Jews.

He illustrates this with his third story, which relates about a young pagan boy who desired very much to see the Lord. The Lord revealed himself to the boy and he converted to Christianity together with the whole of his family (§25-33). From the story, one receives the message that God is there for all, believers and outsiders. He is ready to defend anyone and receive him into His flock. To stress the same message, Athanasius speaks about his

¹⁰ R. Marcus, *Josephus: Jewish Antiquities, Books VII-VIII*, London, 1934, p. 174-185 (Greek text and English translation on parallel pages).

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own personal experience with God. He tells how God listened to his prayers when he asked God to protect him against the Arians and saved him in the end.

The fourth theme of the encomium concentrates on the Holy Communion. It shows the protection offered by daily prayers and how impurity will be revealed. It urges a direct message to remain pure and not to neglect the Holy Mass because the Holy Communion protects you from evil. Athanasius here uses a story about a young man who fell down in the church in powerless state (§34-36). Later the audience is informed that this young man was an adulterer and yet dared to come to share in the Holy Mass. He was prevented of receiving the Holy Communion by heavenly powers and thus his sins were brought to light. Athanasius evaluates the events in a positive sense, explaining that this man was punished during his life; if he had died without making confession, he would have ended up in the fiery furnace.

Athanasius focuses on the close relationship between man and the church and that one day without prayers in the church may have disastrous effects. He illustrates this with another story about a pious builder who used to go to the church daily to pray before going to his work (§37-40). On the only day that he did not manage to enter the church, he fall in the hands of a demon. The message of the story is simple: prayers protect you; do not neglect them even once in order not to be harmed.

The same theme is addressed in a homily on the archangel Gabriel, attributed to Celestine, archbishop of Rome. The manuscript that contains this homily was copied in the year 974, a date close to that of the Hamuli manuscript which contains *On Michael and Gabriel, the Archangels*.¹¹ Celestine narrates a story very similar to the one of the pious builder of our (§37-40). In Celestine's version, we find a pious baker who daily goes to the

¹¹ W. H. Worrell, *The Coptic Manuscripts in the Freer Collection*, New York, 1923, p. 379.

shrine of Gabriel. When he once missed his daily visit, he was seized by a demon. The spiritual message is, of course, the same.¹²

The author of *On Michael and Gabriel, the Archangels* ends his encomium with a short conclusion in which he describes how Michael and Gabriel are important intercessors and encourages his audience to ask them for help (§41-43). For this purpose, he attributes various important roles to them, quoting both apocryphal and Biblical sources. He briefly refers to Michael as the angel who went to Adam in the waters of the River Jordan to give him the seed of life because of his penance. This apocryphal tradition, perhaps of Jewish origin, goes back to the old and popular *Life of Adam and Eve*.¹³ It is circulated in many recensions in the various languages of the Christian East, including Coptic.¹⁴ Thus, the same story is found in *The Mysteries of St. John, the Apostle*, preserved in a manuscript copied around the year 1000 which belongs to the so-called Esna-Edfu find.¹⁵ The *Mysteries* narrate about what St. John saw when he visited Heaven and add many details which are not provided by our encomium.¹⁶ The same apocryphal tradition is shortly reported in *The Book of the Investiture of Gabriel*, preserved in Sahidic in the al-Hamuli collection.¹⁷

The author of *On Michael and Gabriel, the Archangels* also refers to apocryphal narratives about Enoch and records his title of

¹² Worrell, *The Coptic Manuscripts in the Freer Collection*, p. 226-239 (Sahidic text), 351-356 (English translation).

¹³ M. E. Stone, "The Fall of Satan and Adam's penance: Three Notes on the Books of Adam and Eve", *JThS* 44, 1993, p. 148-149.

¹⁴ M. E. Stone, "The Fall of Satan", p. 144.

¹⁵ E. A. W. Budge, *Coptic Apocrypha in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*, London, 1913, p. XXXII-XXXIII.

¹⁶ E. A. W. Budge, *Coptic Apocrypha*, P. 63-64 (Sahidic text), 245-247 (English translation).

¹⁷ C. D. G. Müller, *Die Bücher der Einsetzung der Erzengel Michael und Gabriel*, CSCO 225, Louvain, 1962, p. 71 (Sahidic text); CSCO 226, p. 87, with n. 50 (German translation). For more, see C. D. G. Müller, *Die Engellehre der Koptischen Kirche*, Wiesbaden, 1959, p. 21.

'scribe of righteousness'. Enoch enjoyed an important place in the Coptic tradition. As a celestial scribe, he is the one responsible of registering the sins and the righteous deeds of the humans in Heaven.¹⁸

The author also mentioned that Michael helped somebody in interpreting the dreams of the king (§41). Due to a lacuna in this part of the text, the name of the person concerned is missing. It may be the prophet Daniel (cf. Dan. 5). Other literary works preserved in Coptic attribute the same role to Michael. Thus, a Bohairic homily attributed to John Chrysostom¹⁹ and a very fragmentary work attributed to Peter of Alexandria.²⁰

The use of these apocryphal traditions may give an idea how popular they were among the audiences of the time, as it is to be expected that the author of our homily used traditions and sources which would enhance the persuasive force of his words.

Below, I provide a table which briefly analyses the contents of *On Michael and Gabriel, the Archangels* (Table 2).

¹⁸ For more details about Enoch in the Coptic tradition, see B. A. Pearson, "Enoch in Egypt", in R. A. Argall et al (eds.), *For a Later Generation: The Transformation of Tradition in Israel, Early Judaism and Early Christianity*, Pennsylvania, 2000, p. 224-230.

¹⁹ J. Simon, "Homélie copte inédite sur S. Michel et le bon larron, attribuée à S. Jean Chrysostome", *Orientalia* 3, 1934, p. 230-234 (text); *Orientalia* 4, 1935, p. 225-228 (French translation).

²⁰ W. E. Crum, "Texts Attributed to Peter of Alexandria", *JThS* 4, 1902-1903, p. 395-397.

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Themes	Edition	Manuscript
Prologue.	§1.	f. 89r-89v.
Warnings against fornication.	§2-5.	f. 89v-90r.
Examples from Holy Scripture about the end of adulterers.	§6-8.	f. 90r-90v.
Michael and Gabriel bless the pure ones.	§9-12.	f. 90v-91v.
The story of the Arian George.	§13-15.	f. 91v-92r.
The story of the son of the rich man from Pentapolis.	§16-20.	f. 92r-93r.
The importance of repentance.	§21-24.	f. 93r-94r.
The story of the pagan student.	§25-33.	f. 94r-95v.
The story of the fornicator who fell down in the church.	§34-36.	f. 65v-96v.
The story of the pious builder.	§37-40.	f. 96v-97v.
Final praise of Michael and Gabriel.	§41-42.	f. 97v-98r.
Conclusion.	§43.	f. 98r.

Table 2

On Murder and Greed and on Michael, the Archangel.

In codex M 602, three homilies, attributed to Athanasius of Alexandria, are preserved: the encomium analysed above, the present homily, *On Murder and Greed and on Michael, the Archangel*, and a third one, *On Leviticus 21: 9 and 19: 22, and on Michael, the Archangel*. The titles call the first $\sigma\upsilon\epsilon\gamma\kappa\omega\mu\iota\omicron\nu$, 'an encomium', and the second and third $\sigma\upsilon\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$, 'a homily'. The two compositions entitled $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ differ as much from each other as from the one which is entitled $\sigma\upsilon\epsilon\gamma\kappa\omega\mu\iota\omicron\nu$, whereas all three are clearly moralising homilies. It is clear that not much store can be put on the different genre attributions given by the copyists. Scribes circulated their production under several labels. In addition to the two terms mentioned above, also $\rho\omicron\mu\iota\lambda\iota\alpha$, $\epsilon\zeta\epsilon\gamma\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$, $\mu\alpha\rho\tau\upsilon\rho\iota\alpha$, $\beta\iota\omicron\varsigma$, $\rho\omicron\lambda\gamma\tau\iota\alpha$ and $\kappa\alpha\theta\eta\kappa\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$ were used.²¹

²¹ M. Sheridan, "Rhetorical Structures in Coptic Sermons", in J. E. Goehring and J. A. Timbie (eds.), *The World of Early Egyptian Christianity: Language*,

Although these terms may originally have designated different literary genres, they can replace each other freely in homilies preserved in Coptic. Inversely, the scribes may use one term to label different literary genres.²²

One more issue to be considered in this context is that we received these homilies in their final redactions, whereas little can be known about their genesis, not even by means of careful literary analysis. At the last moment in the process of transmission, their current titles were attached to them, in the process that Tito Orlandi calls 'the synaxarial systematization'.²³ This process took place from some time around the ninth century, when the production of original homilies in Coptic almost stopped and Arabic was on its way to submerge Coptic. The purpose of this 'synaxarial systematization' was to collect existing homiletic works and re-arrange them for liturgical purposes.²⁴ The labels that were attached to these homiletic works, rather than reflecting their original genre, were assigned on the basis of their function at a particular date of the liturgical calendar.

The title of the homily *On Murder and Greed and on Michael, the Archangel* attributes it to Athanasius who is said to have delivered it in the presence of St. Pachomius, who is called archimandrite. It is said to be about murderers and greedy people and about St. Michael the archangel. The title clearly states that Michael is not the main subject of this homily because the author is only mentioning him $\gamma\eta\ \theta\alpha\eta\ \mu\pi\epsilon\iota\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$, 'by the end of this homily'. It is therefore indeed not an encomium since there is no central character who receives praise throughout the homily and who is at the focus of the stories that are told.

Literature, and Social Context: Essays in Honour of David W. Johnson, Washington D.C., 2007, p. 28-29.

²² M. Sheridan, "Rhetorical Structures", p. 29. n. 13.

²³ T. Orlandi, "Coptic Literature", in B. A. Pearson and J. E. Goehring (eds.), *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, Philadelphia, 1986, p. 80.

²⁴ T. Orlandi, "Coptic Literature", p. 81.

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The author starts with recalling the festival of the archangel Michael on which the homily is delivered. He urges his audience to rejoice and celebrate the feast (§1). After this brief introductory paragraph, he plunges right away, in his main subject which occupies most of the homily. He starts with a general warning against transgressing God's commandments (§2) and then focuses on murder and greed (§3-14). His main message is that Christian should be fully pure. When you are greedy, a murderer, or have any relation with pagans, then you are not a Christian. The author warns in particular against the heretics who insult God as a great danger. One should not even greet them. Then come the stories that serve to underpin the author's spiritual message by relating various miraculous events (§15-36).

The first story starts with an interesting introduction. Athanasius praises Pachomius, the archimandrite of Tabennese. After the Arian persecution had come to an end, Pachomius visited Alexandria, where he was welcomed by the archbishop himself (§15). This introduction about Pachomius serves a couple of goals. The first is to show how holy Pachomius was and to persuade the audience to believe the visions that Athanasius is going to recount. The second is to underline the mutual ties of respect and support between the head of the church of Alexandria and Upper-Egyptian monasticism and its leaders.

It deserves to be mentioned here that the way of welcoming Pachomius in Alexandria as described in this homily resembles the welcome that Athanasius himself received in Thebes when he went south to visit the Pachomian communities according to the First Greek and Bohairic Lives of Pachomius. In both cases, the guest was received at the harbour/the Nile and psalms were sung in his way to the church/monastery.²⁵ It seems that the author of *On Murder and Greed and on Michael, the Archangel* is aware of

²⁵ A. Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, vol. 1, Kalamazoo, 1980, p. 51-52, 317-318.

this episode in Pachomius' life and considers this welcome by the archbishop to be some kind of reciprocation.

Athanasius and Pachomius spend the night of Michael's feast in prayers. When the time comes for the celebration of the Eucharist, Pachomius retired to a far corner of the sanctuary because he has no rank in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Here Athanasius himself intervenes as the narrator and, directly addressing his audience, warns the priests not to let any layman enter the sanctuary. When Athanasius starts to spend the Holy Communion, Pachomius sees that the angel of the sacrifice prevents one of the deacons to receive the Holy Communion. Pachomius tells Athanasius what was revealed to him and Athanasius orders all the clergy of Alexandria to assemble in order to find out who is that unworthy deacon. It appears that the unworthy deacon is a murderer. He killed his neighbour and looted his money because he was wealthy and the deacon very poor (§26-32).

The spiritual message of the story is direct and simple: all sins will be revealed. The sinner is tortured all the time by his fear to be caught and haunted by nightmares. In the end he wishes to be punished by God rather than living in such a self-torment. It is better for a killer to be killed on earth than to end in the fiery furnace after the true judgment (§30). The story itself contains vivid pictures of late-antique urban life (the poverty of the deacon, the action of the police) and may even be called an early example of a ghost story.

Then the author moves on to his next subject, which is about whether the sinful Christian will be punished in Hell just like the pagans or not (§33-36). The subject is presented as a mini-dialogue between Athanasius and Pachomius. The latter answers Athanasius' question by recounting a revelation. He claims that a reliable hermit saw a vision of Hell and told him its details. Athanasius later reveals that the reliable hermit is Pachomius himself, and that this is how the holy fathers hide their sanctity.

The hermit saw how the sinners among the Christians were punished together with the pagans behind a huge iron door and in a great fire while crying out from pain. Pachomius, or rather the hermit whom he quotes, spells out the religious message of the vision: the Christian who falls into sin after receiving baptism will be considered a pagan and deserves the same place in Hell.

Also the Bohairic life of Pachomius narrates revelations in which Pachomius is carried away to see the destination of the sinners in Hell. In one of these revelations, an angel tells Pachomius that there are monks among the tortured sinners in Hell.²⁶ One may conclude that there are must be also secular Christians among the sinners in Hell. Both categories receive the same kinds of torments by fire and cry out loudly while nobody listens to them.²⁷ In the same way, the vision of Hell in *On Murder and Greed and on Michael, the Archangel* seeks to warn its audience.

In particular the present homily appears to be inspired by the *Apocalypse of Paul*, a very influential apocryphal text that may have roots in the earliest centuries of Christianity, but is now generally dated to a time around the year 400.²⁸ The *Apocalypse of Paul* circulated in many recensions and languages including Coptic.²⁹ A version of the *Apocalypse of Paul*, that is attested in both Sahidic and Arabic, even attributes it to Athanasius instead of Paul.³⁰ The author of *On Murder and Greed and on Michael, the Archangel* adheres to the view that the victim of a murder has the right to accuse his murderer before the divine judge (§5 and 30). The same idea is presented in the same way in the

²⁶ A. Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, vol. 1, p. 114.

²⁷ A. Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, vol. 1, p. 116.

²⁸ See e.g. J. N. Bremmer, "Christian Hell: From the *Apocalypse of Peter* to the *Apocalypse of Paul*", *Numen* 56, 2009, p. 298-325; for an earlier point of view, cf. R.P. Casey, "The Apocalypse of Paul", *JThS* 34, 1933, p. 28-31.

²⁹ For the Coptic version, see K. B. Copeland, *Mapping the Apocalypse of Paul: Geography, Genre and History*, PhD Dissertation, Princeton University, 2001.

³⁰ E. Lucchesi, "Une (pseudo-)apocalypse d'Athanase en copte", *AB* 115, 1997, p. 244-248.

Apocalypse of Paul (§17-18).³¹ In (§10), the author of *On Murder and Greed and on Michael, the Archangel* briefly mentions the idea of the torture of the sinners in Hell concentrating on murderers. The White Monastery version of the same homily provides more details from which we learn that sinners were to be hanged from their hair and their eyebrows. The same motif occurs in the *Apocalypse of Paul* (§39). There it is told that female adulterers end up in Hell hanging from their hair, while male adulterers are hung from their eyebrows.³²

The *Apocalypse of Paul* is member of a far larger family of apocalyptic literature. In particular it belongs to the literary genre of the so-called 'Tours of Hell/Heaven'.³³ In the representatives of this genre, we frequently see that a saintly figure is allowed to be taken to Hell or Heaven in order to see what is going on there. This figure, often an apostle, is guided on his tour by an *angelus interpres*, who is assigned to him to show him around and often to explain to him what he sees. In (§36) of the al-Hamuli version of our homily *On Murder and Greed and on Michael, the Archangel*, the author out of the blue mentions this *angelus interpres* by having the visionary say: ἀνοκ δε λιπαδε μι πετταβο μοι εναι, 'I spoke with the one who showed me these things', without introducing him to his audience. In the White Monastery version of the same homily, one cannot decide whether the author introduced the *angelus interpres* to his congregation or not due to its fragmentary state. Interestingly, however, the White Monastery version of this homily inserts here a second vision which describes a beautiful tree without fruits

³¹ K. B. Copeland, *Mapping the Apocalypse of Paul: Geography, Genre and History*, PhD Dissertation, Princeton University, 2001, p. 253-256 (Sahidic text), 192-195 (English translation).

³² K. B. Copeland, *Mapping the Apocalypse of Paul*, p. 277-279 (Sahidic text), 216-218 (English translation). For more about hanging in Hell, see M. Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell: An Apocalyptic Form in Jewish and Christian Literature*, Philadelphia, 1983, p. 85-92, esp. table 4 on p. 87.

³³ M. Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell*, p. 1-40, esp. 16-19; M. Himmelfarb, *The Apocalypse: A Brief History*, Chichester, 2010, p. 97-104.

surrounded by a large number of angels (§36). This second vision is missing in the al-Hamuli version of the homily. Even though it did not reach us completely, the second vision is further evidence of the influence of the *Apocalypse of Paul* where the same motif occurs.³⁴ The author of *On Murder and Greed and on Michael, the Archangel* seems to be directly inspired by the genre of the 'Tours of Hell / Heaven'.

In the next part of the homily, Athanasius warns his audience that the people of this age are short-lived and it is better to repent before death in order not to waste your opportunity for salvation. The homilist warns against various types of sins, focusing on magic, false oaths, mocking and hatred (§37-42). He continues in a more positive mood. If a murderous deacon deserves to be punished, good shepherds are worthy to be consoled. In the final story told in this homily, Athanasius himself, as the narrator, becomes the protagonist instead of Pachomius (§44-49). Also this story is told as an episode in the Arian conflict: Athanasius is exiled to Upper-Egypt where he hides as the servant of a dyer in Panopolis, performing the most humble jobs without ever complaining. After three years, St. Michael appears to Athanasius in his full celestial glory to announce him the end of his exile and comfort him. A detailed description of Michael's terrifying appearance is given (§47). Michael then foretells Athanasius that he will be restored to his diocese in Alexandria within three days.³⁵ As Y. N. Youssef has shown, this apparition of Michael as a patron saint of exiled bishops was a traditional topic in both Coptic and Ethiopic sources. It is Michael's special mission to

³⁴ Trees appear many times in the *Apocalypse of Paul*. For the passage where a fruitless tree appears (§24), see K. B. Copeland, *Mapping the Apocalypse of Paul*, p. 263-264 (Sahidic text), 202-203 (English translation).

³⁵ For more examples of similar revelations, see Y. N. Youssef, "The Archangel Michael and the Patriarchs in Exile in Coptic Tradition", in N. Bosson and A. Boud'hors (eds.), *Actes du huitième congrès international d'études coptes: Paris, 28 juin-3 juillet 2004*, Louvain, 2007, vol. 2, p. 646-677.

comfort these persecuted bishops in exile and announce them the end of their tribulations.³⁶

Following his attractive description of Michael, Athanasius continues on the subject of Michael. Here, Athanasius uses short, direct and simple sentences to describe Michael and his role before God as the great intercessor for humanity (§50-51). This final praise of Michael brings the homily to an end.

Comparing the technique of storytelling in the encomium *On Michael and Gabriel, the Archangels* with the present homily there are two main differences. In the encomium, the narrator starts his stories directly, barely introducing events or persons. In the revelations of the homily *On Murder and Greed and on Michael, the Archangel*, Pachomius appears, besides Athanasius himself, as the main character. He is extensively introduced to the audience as a holy man who has a close relationship with God who granted him the gift of clairvoyance (§16). Secondly, in the encomium, the narrator depends on a number of short stories, whereas in the second homily he uses a smaller number of relatively long stories.

The following table sums up the contents of the second homily (Table 3).

³⁶ Y. N. Youssef, "The Archangel Michael and the Patriarchs in Exile", p. 645, esp. nos. 3-4.

Literary Analysis

Themes	Edition	Manuscript
Prologue.	§1-2.	f. 98v-99r.
Warnings against murder, greed and other sins.	§3-14.	f. 99r-101v.
The revelation of St. Pachomius and the murderous deacon.	§15-32.	f. 101v-105v.
St. Pachomius' vision of Hell.	§33-36.	f. 105v-106v.
Various admonitions.	§37-42.	f. 106v-108r.
Michael comforts Athanasius during his exile in Panopolis.	§43-49.	f. 108r-109v.
Praise of Michael.	§50-51.	f. 109v-110v.

Table 3

On Luke 11: 5-9.

This homily is again called a *λογος* in its title, just like the homily analyzed above. Yet the contents and the literary style of this homily are quite different. The main (first) part of the homily, rather than preaching against sins and telling edifying stories, is entirely concerned with Biblical exegesis. According to the title, Athanasius was responding in this homily to inquiries made by "the clergy and the great of the land of Isauria", who were visiting him and in whose presence he delivered this homily. It is almost certain that no Isaurian delegation ever visited Athanasius. Below I will try to explain why the author or redactor of this homily used this fanciful device.

The title of this homily is longer than the titles of the last two homilies and that of the next, fourth homily. It takes three

columns of the manuscript (f. 35v-36r). In this title, all the subjects of the homily are mentioned in their correct order. The final editor of the homily carefully attached a title to it that expresses the whole of its contents, different from what the scribes of the other three homilies, edited in this dissertation, did. They attached short titles to their homilies which present their contents only briefly or very approximately, as for instance in the case of the fourth homily, *On Pentecost*. The title of *On Luke 11: 5-9* can be qualified as an 'extended complex structure title', in Buzi's terminology.³⁷

The author of *On Luke 11: 5-9* from the beginning clearly signals his audience that he is going to discuss his first theme, on the pericope of the midnight friend, in three parts. He starts with a prologue (§1-5), then he offers a material exegesis (§6-8) and finally a spiritual exegesis of the pericope (§9-21). He explicitly announces the transitions to his audience in (§4 and 9). One may consider this section of the homily as an example of a text-based homily.

As a prologue, Athanasius expresses his satisfaction in seeing the Isaurians. To mark the transition to the real subject, he addresses them with a typical show of modesty: "For I see that the road is long and I, this most humble one, I am not good in running, but may your holy prayers help us so that we will be able to pay off the debt that you have requested" (§5).

In his material exegesis of the parable of the midnight friend, Athanasius then re-tells the pericope as narrated in the Gospel of Luke. He provides basic explanations just to pave the way for his spiritual exegesis. In this third part, Athanasius interprets the parable in a symbolic, allegorical way. He presents the friend, who stays home, as God, and the other friend, who sets out to seek his friend at midnight, as man. They are friends, therefore

³⁷ P. Buzi, *Titoli*, p. 119-124.

Athanasius raises the question: How we can be God's friends? And his answer is: Only by keeping his commandments (§10).

Athanasius symbolically interprets the walk at midnight from the house of the first man to his friend's home as the result of the arrival of repentance. In order to receive forgiveness and be redeemed, it is better to repent early and not to wait until midnight, i.e. the last moment in your life (§13-15).

When the author comes to the interpretation of the three loaves of bread, for which the friend asks, he explains that they refer to prayer, fasting and tears (§15). The same interpretation is found in the Bohairic *Catena* of the Gospels, which are a selection of commentaries to Gospel passages excerpted from the writings of the Fathers of the Church. The *Catena* attribute it to 'the patriarch', most probably Severus of Antioch, who was a popular author in Egypt from the second half of the sixth century onwards.³⁸ In support of his interpretation, the homilist quotes three biblical passages which connect the three words, prayers (Prv. 18: 20), fasting (Dt. 8: 3) and tears (Ps. 41: 3) with bread or food, but otherwise hardly fit the context (§15-16).

The parable relates that the man refused to give his friend the three loaves in the beginning, but after showing much insistence and audacity, he received what he needed. Athanasius praises the man for his insistence and advises his audience to do the same. Insist to persuade God that you want to repent, even if it is late, then he will accept you. When you hesitate, the evil one will come to dissuade you and you will miss your chance to be saved (§20-21).

³⁸ It is most likely that the Bohairic *catena* was translated from a Syrian source. See P. de Lagarde, *Catena in evangelia Aegyptiacae quae supersunt*, Göttingen, 1886, reprint Osnabrück, 1971, p. 142-145. I was unable to trace the passage in question in the extant works of Severus of Antioch. For Severus' style of exegesis, see R. Roux, *L'exégèse biblique dans les Homélie cathédrales de Sévère d'Antioche*, Rome, 2002, p. 11-19.

The Luke pericope is still widely used in the readings of the present-day Coptic Church. Luke 11: 1-13 is read twice per year, on the evening raising of incense of the last Sunday of Lent and on the first Sunday of the month of Baounah. Luke 11: 1-10 is read on the first Friday of Lent.³⁹ This wide use of the parable of the midnight friend in the present-day Bohairic liturgy, may perhaps be linked to the ascetic interpretation of the pericope proposed by the present homily and also attested by the Bohairic *Catena*.

The next part of the homily in a loose way develops the theme of repentance by telling a story. Athanasius relates how he was persecuted by the Arians and went to the South. He visited Pachomius and his monastic communities and praises them for their angelic way of life and the many miracles which he saw with his own eyes. The main character in the story, besides Pachomius, is a man called Phoibamon, who was very rich but oppressed his poor workmen. During the celebration of the Eucharist in the church of the monastery led by Pachomius, the workmen started to shout against Phoibamon. Pachomius became very annoyed and asked God to intervene in favour of the workmen. As a result, Phoibamon lost his abilities to speak and to move. By the end of the Eucharist, Phoibamon promised to give his fortune to the poor and become a monk in case God would give him back his speech. This happened and Phoibamon kept his promise. He not only became a monk but later was even ordained a bishop of Koptos (§22-29).

Unconnected with the preceding, there follows a brief digression about the friendship between David and Jonathan, purportedly in response to a request by the Isaurian delegation. He describes how, in spiritual friendship, one loves to give his life for his friend and compares the two brothers, Abel and Cain, who had a blood relationship and yet one killed the other, with Jonathan and

³⁹ I consulted the unpublished indices of the readings of the Coptic annual liturgy, kept at St. George church, Sporting, Alexandria.

David, who were no kin but who were ready to die for each other because of their friendship (§30-33). The most interesting feature of this digression is a brief passage in which the author warns his audience to watch their disposition (προαίρεσις). Whoever does not watch his disposition, so he says, is no more human but an animal, for the disposition represents the rational faculty (§32). These few sentences and their terminology are an echo of traditional Alexandrian anthropology. Similar ideas can be found, for example, in the *Teachings of Silvanus* from the Nag Hammadi library (§93, 19-94; 107, 20-21)⁴⁰ and in other early Christian authors from Alexandria.⁴¹

The author again changes his subject in response to the purported questions of the Isaurian clergymen. This time, the subject is the Orthodox faith and how to keep it. In his reply, Athanasius again tells a story from his own experience, now about the Council of Nicaea (325), which he himself attended. He describes the audacity of the heretic Carpocratius who maintained that Christ spent only seven months in the womb of his mother, Mary.⁴² Alexander of Constantinople, on the other hand, insisted that Christ partook of the complete human nature, except for sin, and accordingly was born after a normal pregnancy of nine months.

⁴⁰ J. Zandee, *The Teaching of Silvanus (Nag Hammadi Codex VII, 4): Text, Translation, Commentary*, Leiden, 1991, p. 30-33, 58-59 (Sahidic text and English translation on parallel pages).

⁴¹ See J. Zandee, *'The Teaching of Silvanus' and Clement of Alexandria: A New Document of Alexandrian Theology*, Leiden, 1977, p. 48-50; J. Zandee, *The Teaching of Silvanus*, p. 355-375.

⁴² Carpocratius (actually Carpocrates) was an Alexandrian Gnostic teacher who lived in the first half of the second century. His followers, the Carpocratians, presumably survived till the fourth century. Traces of his teachings can be found in Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I, 25; Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 7, 32 and Clement, *Stromata* 3, 2-6; cf. C. W. Griggs, "Carpocrates", in A. S. Atiyah (ed.), *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, vol. 2, New York, 1991, p. 461; F. L. Cross, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd. ed., Oxford, 1997, p. 291-292. For Carpocrates as represented in the Coptic tradition, see R. van den Broek, "Der Bericht des koptischen Kyrillos von Jerusalem über das Hebräerevangelium", in his *Studies in Gnosticism and Alexandrian Christianity*, Leiden, 1996, p. 142-156.

The dispute is then settled by a miracle which proves Alexander⁴³ to be right and refutes Carpocratius, who is then condemned by all present (§36).

Interestingly, there are some more examples in Coptic homilies of such a debate about the 'short pregnancy' of the Holy Virgin. In a famous homily of Shenoute entitled *I am amazed*, he attributed to Nestorius the statement that Christ spent only three months in the womb of the Virgin (§480).⁴⁴ Obviously, Shenoute wants to defame Nestorius in the eyes of his fellow monks by using the theme of the 'short pregnancy' of the Virgin as a polemical theme against heresy.⁴⁵ Another example is found in a homily entitled *The Discourse on Mary Theotokos* attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem.⁴⁶ In this homily, a monk called Annarikhus tells Cyril that it is written in the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, which circulated under the name of 'Arpocradios' and others, that Christ spent only seven months in the womb of his mother. Cyril of Jerusalem then refutes the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*.⁴⁷

⁴³ There is a certain ambiguity here, as it is unclear whether Alexander of Alexandria or Alexander of Constantinople is meant.

⁴⁴ For this homily, see S. Emmel, *Shenoute's Literary Corpus*, vol. 1, Louvain, 2004, p. 646-648; for the passage in question, T. Orlandi, *Shenute contra Origenistas: testo con introduzione e traduzione*, Roma, 1985, p. 45 (edition of Sahidic text); H.-J. Cristea, *Schenute von Atripe: Contra Origenistas. Edition des koptischen Textes mit annotierter Übersetzung und Indizes einschließlich einer Übersetzung des 16. Osterfestbriefs des Theophilus in der Fassung des Hieronymus (ep. 96)*, Tübingen, 2011, p. 196-197 (Sahidic text), p. 269-270 (German translation); for more about Shenoute and Nestorius, see there p. 81-88. In his Arabic translation of this text, S. Moawad suggests that the number of 'three months' is a scribal mistake, S. Moawad, *Shenoute the Archimandrite: His Vita, Homilies and Canons*, vol. 1, Cairo, 2009, p. 148, n. 139 (in Arabic), which is unlikely, however.

⁴⁵ For more discussion, see J. van der Vliet, "Une vierge de Daphné. Notes sur un thème apocalyptique", *Byzantion* 64, 1995, p. 381-384.

⁴⁶ A. E. W. Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*, London, 1915, p. 59 (Sahidic text) and 637 (English translation).

⁴⁷ We have only a few quotations of this text which reached us in both Greek and Latin, through Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Didymus the Blind and Jerome. It was probably a Jewish-Christian apocryphal Gospel of Egyptian origin. See B. Ehrman and Z. Pleše, *The Apocryphal Gospels: Texts and*

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Apparently, the stories around the 'short pregnancy' of the Holy Virgin belong to a similar older tradition. The anonymous authors of *On Luke 11: 5-9* and *The Discourse on Mary Theotokos* and Shenoute, the great monastic leader, who actually attended the Council of Ephesus (431), all quote it in order to defame heretics and to build strong bridges between their audiences and the Church which represents Orthodoxy. They changed the name of the heretic and turned the motif of the unnatural pregnancy into a cipher for Christological heresy for the sake of the Orthodox message they want to convey. Also the story of the Nicene synod in *On Luke 11: 5-9* tells the audience that 'we' are on the side of Orthodoxy and that heaven is supporting us by miracles.

Finally, the author of our homily moves on to a different issue again, urging his audience not to receive the Holy Communion if they are not worthy. Keep pure to be able to inherit the kingdom of God (§40-41).

In this homily, as in the two earlier homilies, stories which narrate miracles are used to support the point of view of the preacher. He evokes persons from history, praises or defames them and employs them in order to influence his audience. Athanasius plays two roles in these stories. He appears as one of the main actors in the story and at the same time as its narrator and an eyewitness who guarantees its authoritative status. Thus, the story could become successful as a persuasive tool.

Obviously, the homily belongs to various types of literary genres. The first part is an example of allegorical exegesis and the remainder combines direct paraenetic speech with storytelling. Its Biblical exegesis is reminiscent of some of the homilies of

Translations, Oxford, 2011, p. 216-222; J. K. Elliot, *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation*, Oxford, 1993, p. 6-8; M. Geerard, *Clavis apocryphorum Novi Testamenti*, Turnhout, 1992, p. 4, Nr. 11.

Origen.⁴⁸ Origen delivered these homilies at Caesarea for the benefit of less educated audiences.⁴⁹ They were well connected with liturgical celebrations and follow the liturgical calendar. Some sources even tell that Origen had to preach daily that his homilies covered most of the year. The single homilies are divided into a prologue, a body and a conclusion and marked by numerous Biblical quotations and allusions. In this type of homilies, one verse could be repeated several times and receive various explanations given from different standards of interpretation. The massive number of homilies attributed to Origen were to be delivered orally and then taken down by scribes. At some point Origen himself was said to feel nervous about unauthorised material that was circulating under his name.⁵⁰ The first part of *On Luke 11: 5-9* that deals with the pericope of the midnight friend, adheres to this type of preaching.⁵¹ The author comments on the parable in two different ways and many verses are repeated to receive different comments for the sake of conveying the author's moral lessons. It is clearly laid out in three parts and may be considered a quite successful example of a typically Alexandrian way of preaching. Alexandrian influence is also apparent in the brief digression on the friendship between David and Jonathan, in particular (§32).

Apart from the biblical exegesis, which is well written and well organized, the remainder of the homily is a patchwork in which one cannot find any internal coherence. The transitions between the various subjects are abrupt and unnatural. The only connection between the various subjects, as far as can be seen, is

⁴⁸ For the structure of Origen's homilies, see P. Nautin, *Origène: Homélie sur Jérémie*, Sources chrétiennes 232, Paris, 1976, p. 123-131.

⁴⁹ For the history of these homilies, see Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, VI, 36.

⁵⁰ J. A. McGuckin, *The Westminster Handbook to Origen*, Westminster, 2004, p. 28-29.

⁵¹ For more examples of this type of homilies preserved in Coptic, see M. Sheridan, *The Homilies of Rufus of Shotep on the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, PhD dissertation, The Catholic University of America, 1990, p. 28-37.

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the fictitious personality of Athanasius of Alexandria and his imagined answers to the fanciful inquiries of the Isaurians. In addition to the title, the homily refers to the inquiries of the Isaurians whenever a new theme comes up (§30, 34 and 40). All this suggests that the well formatted title is due to the final editor of the homily, who used the motif of the Isaurian visitors and their inquiries as a device to bring the various themes of this homily together. Compared to the other homilies edited in this dissertation, *On Luke 11: 5-9* seems the most incoherent, in spite of containing a nice example of Alexandrian biblical exegesis.

The following table presents a summary of the contents of *On Luke 11: 5-9* (Table 4).

Themes	Edition	Manuscript
Prologue.	§1-5.	f. 36r-37v.
Material exegesis of Luke 11: 5-9	§6-8.	f. 37v-38v.
Spiritual exegesis of Luke 11: 5-9	§9-21.	f. 38v-42r.
St. Pachomius and the wicked rich man Phoibamon.	§22-29.	f. 42r-45v.
The friendship between Jonathan and David.	§30-33.	f. 45v-46v.
The heretic Carpocratius.	§34-39.	f. 46v-48v.
On Holy Communion.	§40-42.	f.48v-49v.

Table 4

On Pentecost.

The fourth homily is called a *καθηγησις*, 'instruction', in its title. This term fits the contents well, since most of it takes the form of 'do/do not' prescriptions. This homily is the longest of the four. It can be divided according to its four main subjects into: warnings against various sins (§1-10), the Christian household (§11-36), wealth and poverty (§37-67) and proper behaviour in church (§68-79). The rather brief title, by contrast, mentions as its subjects only Pentecost and the theme of wealth and poverty. It adds that it was preached before 'a crowd of bishops', assembled in the church on the occasion of Pentecost.

This homily is characterised by a large number of Biblical quotations and allusions upon which the author comments. The author moves smoothly between the quotations with which he provides his listeners. At the transition from one theme to another, he tries to attract the attention of his listeners by using direct speech, addressing his audience using the first person singular/second person plural, see (§37).

From the very beginning of the homily, the author structures his homily by dividing it into short units. Every unit consists of a Biblical quotation and a brief comment. It is not always easy to find out whether there is a reason to present the units in this particular order or not. Thus he warns his audience against fornication and advises women not to show her beauty. Then he also warns the listeners against concentrating on collecting possessions and forgetting their religious duties. He continues in the same manner, giving direct instructions supported by Biblical quotations, till the end of this introductory part (§1-10).

In the second part, the author presents a blueprint of the ideal Christian household (§11-36). The main message is that the major responsibility for the family lies with the husband. The husband is the one who should treat his wife and children in a kind way, with particular care for instructing them in the Christian faith. The

homilist puts great weight on the idea that Christian women should be decently dressed and not wear jewellery, as this is a sign of prostitution (§32). Although this argument is highly dependent on his interpretation of the verses he quotes from the Old Testament, one cannot ignore that his language is influenced by earlier Christian authors, such as Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215). In the twelfth chapter of the second book of his work *The Educator*, Clement reaches exactly the same conclusion: 'jewellery is nothing but a symbol of adultery'.⁵² The same issue was discussed by Tertullian (c. 155-240) in his work *The Apparel of Women*.⁵³ Tertullian took the argument a step further than his contemporary Clement. While addressing women who had converted to Christianity recently, he distinguished between dress, jewellery, hair covers and make-up and discusses each in detail. Tertullian strongly warned women against jewellery, golden ornaments and whatever kind of precious stones to adorn their hair. To do so, he quoted a version of the *Book of Enoch* in which it is said that precious stones are the invention of the fallen angels.⁵⁴ He discussed the subject again in his work *Concerning the Veiling of Virgins*.⁵⁵ As Quasten says, Tertullian apparently found the subject highly important, since he wrote about it in both Greek and Latin.⁵⁶ In this particular treatise, Tertullian concentrated on covering the head of women inside and outside of the church. One may compare (§33) of our homily *On Pentecost*, which thus seems influenced by the writings of the Fathers of the Church from the early centuries of Christianity. Their texts were known in Alexandria and this may suggest that *On Pentecost* is connected to that city.

⁵² S. P. Wood, *Clement of Alexandria: Christ the Educator*, New York, 1954, p. 194-195.

⁵³ R. Arbesmann, *Tertullian: Disciplinary, Moral and Ascetical Works*, New York, 1959, p. 110-149.

⁵⁴ R. Arbesmann, *Tertullian*, p. 118-120.

⁵⁵ *ANF*, vol. 4, p. 27-37.

⁵⁶ J. Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 2: *The Ante-Nicene Literature after Irenaeus*, Westminster, 1986, p. 306.

From a stylistic point of view, this part of the homily relies heavily on direct rhetorical questions. This is a kind of questions to which no answer is expected, but that are rather declarative statements in disguise.⁵⁷ There is a striking number of paragraphs that start with 'Did not you ...?' and 'Are not you ...?'. This kind of questions gives the listeners the feeling that the speaker is dissatisfied with them and they are somehow falling short of his expectations. To some extent, the use of direct rhetorical questions stimulates the listeners. It helps the author to divide his speech into short units that attract the attention and remain vivid in the memory of the audience.

The third theme of *On Pentecost* concerns wealth and poverty, the subject which is mentioned in the title (§37-67). The first message of this section is that many work hard for the sake of their temporal life but neglect the eternal life in God's kingdom. A loose exegesis of the pericope of Lazarus and the rich man (Lk. 16: 19-31) occupies an important place in this part of the homily.⁵⁸ The rich man is called Nineve, a name well attested in the Sahidic versions of Luke and frequently used in other Coptic homiletic works.⁵⁹ The story underlines the homilist's message, that our life in this world is just a test, and that we will be rewarded with either eternal happiness or eternal torture according to our works.

The author extensively quotes the Patriarch Abraham as a model for rich people to use their wealth in a good way (§39-41). The rich should comfort the poor, but the poor should be happy that they remain free from the temptations and the responsibilities that

⁵⁷ C. H. Reintges, *Coptic Egyptian (Sahidic Dialect): A Learner's Grammar*, Köln, 2004, p. 151.

⁵⁸ G. W. Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Southern Dialect*, vol. 2, Oxford, 1911, p. 314-315.

⁵⁹ For more discussion, see L. Th. Lefort, "Le nom du mauvais riche (Lc 16:19) et la tradition copte", *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 37, 1939, p. 65-72, esp. 67-68; K. Grobel, "[...]Whose Name was Neves", *NTS* 10/3, 1964, p. 373-382; H.-J. Cristea, "Gepriesen sei Gott: Eine Predigt des Apa Schenute", *JCS* 7, 2005, p. 54, n. 35.

are plaguing the rich. This part of the homily uses again the technique of rhetorical questions. The homilist asks a question, preaches a simple short point and then asks the next question. The author uses this technique freely so that it is often difficult to see why he arranges these questions in this particular order. He formally addresses distinct kinds of audiences and adapts the contents of his speech to each type of listeners: women and men, rich and poor, laymen and bishops. On the whole, these seem to be urban, non-monastic audiences.

The theme of wealth and poverty is discussed in a very similar way in a homily entitled *On Riches and on Michael, the Archangel* and attributed to Peter of Alexandria, preserved in both Sahidic and Bohairic.⁶⁰ The manuscript which contains the Sahidic version of this homily is part of codex M 602 of the al-Hamuli find, the same codex which contains also the first two homilies edited in this dissertation.⁶¹ The author of *On Riches and on Michael, the Archangel* addresses, in its first part, almost the same themes as *On Pentecost* and uses the same technique of shifting from one type of audience to another, speaking to the rich then to the poor and then to the church leaders (§70-74). There are even literal parallels between both texts. For instance, in the Sahidic version of *On Riches and on Michael, the Archangel*, the rich man is addressed like this: ἀκοῦωμ ἐν οὐβαλ μπονηρος 'you ate with a jealous eye' (§20); in the Bohairic version: ἀκοῦωμ βεν οὐβαλ βων.⁶² The same rare expression occurs in *On Pentecost* (§58), where it appears as κοῦωμ ἐν οὐβαλ μπονηρος, 'you are eating with a jealous eye'. It is difficult to account for these striking similarities. Birger Pearson and Tim Vivian, the editors of the homily *On Riches*, consider the possibility that the part on wealth and poverty represents the core of the homily. This

⁶⁰ B. Pearson et al., *Two Coptic Homilies attributed to Saint Peter of Alexandria: On Riches, on the Epiphany*, Rome, 1993, p. 41-67 (Sahidic text), 68-93 (Bohairic text), 95-144 (English translation).

⁶¹ L. Depuydt, *Catalogue*, p. 224-225, nr. 116.1.

⁶² B. Pearson et al., *Two Coptic Homilies*, p. 49, 72.

original core could, according to the editors, date back to fourth century Alexandria and even to Archbishop Peter himself, who died in 313.⁶³ The evidence of the present homily, *On Pentecost*, renders this hypothesis rather unlikely.

The final section of *On Pentecost* concentrates on the conditions which Christians should meet in order to attend the Holy Mass properly and be worthy to share in the mysteries (§68-79). The author uses various rhetorical techniques in this part of his homily, both rhetorical questions and absolute contrasts. He opposes the group of people who are fully absorbed by their worldly business to those who are concerned with their salvation. The author describes the first group as wholly negative in its behaviour and even compares them with the ones who crucified Christ. This technique of preaching is both clear and attractive, with moral lessons given in simple paraenetic speech. Give yourself time and opportunity to consider your final destination. Again, primarily an audience of wealthy city-dwellers appears to be addressed.

Only in the very end of *On Pentecost*, in (§79), the author at last mentions the feast of Pentecost, which was mentioned in the title as the main subject of the homily. It seems that these few lines were added to the homily secondarily, before it was given its final shape in which it has reached us. This was most likely done in order that the homily fulfil a liturgical use, to be preached on the day of Pentecost. These lines were added quickly and apparently without much care. In quoting John 14: 26, the editor committed two errors in a single short verse, whereas such errors are not found elsewhere in the homily.

In general, the author of the homily shows a very good knowledge of the Bible. Only when quoting Luke 6: 24-25 in (§24), he uses the rhythm and style of Jesus' words, which start with 'woe to you ...' and conclude with 'for you ...', in order to insert a phrase that is

⁶³ B. Pearson et al., *Two Coptic Homilies*, p. 25-31.

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not in the Gospel text: 'Woe to you who bless, now you will curse'. As this phrase seems not to be recorded as a variant reading in the manuscripts of Luke 6, it looks like an addition of the author who adopted the style of Jesus' words to reinforce his spiritual message.

Finally, in spite of its episodic structure, *On Pentecost* gives a strong sense of unity. Its main themes are well connected and the transitions among the themes are logical and natural. Throughout the homily, the same style of Biblical quotations is used with a strong preference for and excellent knowledge of the Old Testament. There are no fanciful stories told that interrupt the paraenetic argument. It appears that this homily, different from the other three homilies edited here, is not a patchwork but most likely conceived as a unity, even if its connection with Pentecost is tenuous.

The table below (Table 5) present a summary of the contents of *On Pentecost*.

Themes	Edition	Manuscript
Prologue: belief and unbelief.	§1-6.	f. 118v-119v.
Obedience and disobedience.	§7-10.	f. 119v-120v.
The Christian household.	§11-36.	f. 120v-127v.
Wealth and poverty.	§37-67.	f. 127v-137r.
Behaviour in church.	§68-79.	f. 137r-140v.

Table 5

General Remarks.

The first three homilies edited in this dissertation consist of a title, a brief introduction, the main paraenetic themes, and finally a few lines of conclusion. In his discussion of the main subjects, the

homilist brings home his message with the help of a story or stories which mostly recount miracles or miraculous events. The fourth homily, *On Pentecost*, is marked by the absence of storytelling, except for such stories as are quoted from the Scriptures and which are fully integrated into the author's paraenetic argument.

Detlef Müller suggests that the ancient Coptic homilist received a basic training that taught him how to present an introduction, some argumentations and a conclusion.⁶⁴ The first two homilies edited here would generally fit with Müller's picture. The author of the first part of *On Luke 11: 5-9*, however, clearly presents a well structured piece of Biblical exegesis, announcing at the outset that there will be a prologue (§5) and two further parts, the first is a material exegesis (§6-8) and the second is a spiritual exegesis of Luke 11: 5-9 (§9-21). In general, however, the structure of the four homilies can best be qualified as episodic. Each separate unit of the homilies is smoothly delivered and helps the audience to be prepared for the next. Yet, each unit looks independent to some extent and the relation between them is not clear enough. In the case of *On Luke 11: 5-9*, such a relation even seems lacking, resulting in a very incoherent text.

The authors of these homilies were inspired by various kinds of older sources. In addition to Holy Scripture, these sources are a mixture of apocryphal, patristic and (pseudo)-historical texts. The authors used these older texts to turn their homilies into efficacious means of influencing the attitudes of their audiences. Whatever were their sources, these older elements are embedded in a persuasive text purposely designed as a contribution to shaping, confirming and reproducing the communities where they were read and transmitted.

⁶⁴ C.D.G. Müller, "Koptische Redekunst und griechische Rhetorik", *Le Muséon* 69, 1956, p. 55-60.

The homilies as we have them now are the result of a process of transmission through time. During this transmission, these homilies must have been coloured totally or partly by the purposes of their editors. It seems that in particular the first three homilies were edited several times. They experienced inner editing which was done by adding a paragraph, omitting another, or improving the language in the way the scribe choose, and outer editing which was done by collecting various homilies around a single subject or occasion together in one codex, a process known as that of the 'synaxarial systematization'.⁶⁵ The fourth homily, *On Pentecost*, is so long that it would cost a fluent Coptic preacher more than an hour to read it. It is the longest homily transmitted under the name of Athanasius⁶⁶ and one of the longest homilies from the al-Hamuli find, but, according to Müller, its length would not be abnormal in antiquity.⁶⁷ In spite of its size, it is the most coherent homily of all. It looks as if it was written as a single long piece of paraenesis, uninterrupted by storytelling and with all its units well connected.

As a general rule, the authors of these homilies did not show much interest in applying specific rhetorical techniques in their homilies. This does not mean that the authors totally ignored ways of attracting their audience's attention and improving the literary quality of their preaching. They tried to do so by using the common methods which can be found in most Coptic homilies. They, from time to time, use vocatives to ensure of the attention of the listeners and show variation in the formulae by which they

⁶⁵ T. Orlandi, "Coptic Literature", p. 80.

⁶⁶ All homilies circulated under the name of Athanasius of Alexandria are comparable in length, except for *On Pentecost*. For a list of these homilies, see T. Orlandi, *Elementi di lingua e letteratura copta: corso di lezioni universitarie*, Milano, 1970, p. 77-78. For some examples, in addition to the first three homilies edited in this dissertation, see J. B. Bernardin, "A Coptic Sermon Attributed to St. Athanasius", *JTS* 38, 1937, p. 113-129; "The Resurrection of Lazarus", *AJSL* 52, 1940, p. 262-292.

⁶⁷ C. D. G. Müller, *Die alte koptische Predigt*, PhD dissertation, Heidelberg University, 1953, p. 343-344.

address their audiences. In addition to the above mentioned technique of direct rhetorical questions, the most characteristic element in the literary strategies of these homilies is that the authors choose a certain word to use as a repeated start of a series of consecutive sentences. This technique is called anaphora and it is not rare in Coptic homilies in general.⁶⁸

The author of the second homily, *On Murder and Greed and on Michael, the Archangel*, combined the strategy of antithesis with the technique of anaphora in (§9). He repeatedly used the expression 'a Christian who does ...' as his starting point and ends with the antithesis 'is not a Christian'. This mixture of techniques makes this portion of the homily quite attractive. It is noteworthy that other homilies of the *corpus* attributed to Athanasius of Alexandria in Coptic, more or less contemporaneous with the ones edited in this dissertation, are marked by their interesting rhetorical style.⁶⁹ Their authors made considerable efforts to achieve an attractive rhetorical style and rhetoric was a major concern for them, different from what can be seen in the four homilies edited here.

With the exception of the fourth homily, *On Pentecost*, the anonymous authors of the homilies did their best to make their texts look like authentic patristic writings by using Athanasius as a narrator and sometimes an eyewitness of what they are telling their audiences. At the same time, the authors glorified Athanasius himself by recounting the miracles that happened to him or through him. They used the names of historical figures and compiled attractive stories about them in order to make their works more attractive.

⁶⁸ M. Sheridan, "Rhetorical Structure", p. 31-32.

⁶⁹ Compare with the rhetorical structure of pseudo-Athanasius, *On the Resurrection of Lazarus* and *On the Sufferings of Christ Jesus and on the Fear of the Judgment Place*, for which see M. Sheridan, "Rhetorical Structure", p. 30-39.

In her study of the texts of the *Acta Martyrum*, the principal manuscripts of which date from the tenth century and are therefore more or less contemporary to our homilies, Ewa Zakrzewska correctly observed that the narrator remains covert and only on rare occasions presents comments or manifests himself otherwise.⁷⁰ By contrast, the narrator of the stories in our homilies is manifest all the time, except in the case of *On Pentecost*. In the other three homilies, he is an important indirect subject and propaganda for the sake of his personality is apparent everywhere. Apparently, the compilers of these homilies not only made an effort to make them look authentic and give them the authority of a great Church Father, Athanasius, but they also tried to build and strengthen Athanasius' fame among their local audiences.

It is important to realize that the goal of the storytelling in the first three homilies is not to relate accurate historical events but to involve the audience into the narrative for the sake of the religious preaching and communal identity.⁷¹ For the search for the historical Athanasius, these homilies are not helpful at all. Yet they are of extreme importance for reconstructing the mental image of Athanasius among the Egyptian Christians in the centuries after his death.⁷²

⁷⁰ E. D. Zakrzewska, "Masterplots and Martyrs: Narrative Techniques in Bohairic Hagiography", in F. Hagen et al. (eds.), *Narratives of Egypt and the Ancient Near East: Literary and Linguistic Approaches*, Louvain, 2001, p. 504-505.

⁷¹ C. Rapp, "Storytelling as Spiritual Communication in Early Greek Hagiography: The Use of Diegesis", *JECS* 6, 1998, p. 443-446.

⁷² For more, see the next chapter and I. Saweros, "The Perception of St. Athanasius of Alexandria in Later Coptic Literature", in G. Gabra and H. Takla (eds.), *Christianity and Monasticism in Beni Souef, Giza and the Delta* (forthcoming).

