



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

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

Saweros, I.K.I.

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>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/44031>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/44031> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

Author: Saweros, I.K.I.

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

Issue Date: 2016-11-09

English Summary

In this dissertation, four homilies preserved in Sahidic Coptic and attributed to Saint Athanasius of Alexandria (c. 296-373) are presented for the first time in a critical edition, together with an English translation. The edition is made after manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, which originate from a deserted medieval monastery in the Egyptian province of al-Fayoum and date from the ninth-tenth centuries. The surviving fragments of other manuscripts are presented in columns parallel to the text of the main manuscripts.

The first homily, which is preserved in manuscript M 602, f. 89r-98r, is an encomium in praise of the archangels Michael and Gabriel. This encomium heavily depends on storytelling in delivering its moral lessons. The homilist narrates no less than five stories in order to illustrate his argument.

The second homily is about murder and greed and about Saint Michael, the archangel. It is preserved in manuscript M 602, f. 98v-110v. Its title claims that it was delivered in the presence of Saint Pachomius, the famous monastic leader from Upper Egypt, when he came to visit Athanasius in Alexandria. Two visions of Pachomius, narrated by Athanasius, occupy most of the homily. The first vision exposes an unworthy deacon who proved to be a murderer. The second deals with the punishment of sinful Christians in Hell. By the end of the homily, Athanasius narrates a vision of his own, in which Michael, the archangel, appeared to him during his exile in Panopolis in Upper Egypt. In various passages of this homily, the influence of the apocryphal *Apocalypse of Paul* can be discerned.

The third homily is preserved in manuscript M 577, f. 37v-49v. Its title claims that this homily was delivered by Athanasius in response to the inquiries of clergymen from Isauria, in Asia Minor, who had come to visit him. The first and main subject of the homily is an exegesis of the pericope of the midnight friend in

Luke 11: 5-9. Then Athanasius relates the story of an unmerciful rich man, Phoibamon, who following a miracle of Saint Pachomius, became a monk and later a bishop of Koptos in Upper Egypt. A brief discussion of the friendship between Jonathan and David follows. Finally, the miraculous refutation of the heretic Carpocratius during the Council of Nicaea in 325 is recounted.

The fourth homily is, according to its title, about Pentecost. It is preserved in manuscript M 595, f. 118v-140v. Athanasius as an author is not manifest in this homily, except in the title. The homilist addresses various themes on the basis of a great number of Biblical quotations. The most important ones are: the Christian household, wealth and poverty and behaviour in church. Pentecost is only briefly discussed in the very last lines of the homily.

The editions and translation of the four texts are preceded by a general introduction. The first chapter of this introduction describes the textual transmission of the homilies and the individual manuscripts. The second chapter contains a literary analysis of the homilies. The third chapter deals with the question of authorship, date and place of origin of the texts. A fourth chapter discusses the picture of the historical St. Athanasius as it is transmitted by the first three of the homilies. An appendix reports about the search for later translations of these texts into Arabic. Finally the principles underlying the edition are outlined.

It appears that the first three homilies are didactic homilies, composed with the help of various earlier sources. Their final redaction may have taken place as late as the period of the so-called 'synaxarial systematization', around the ninth century, when they were adapted for liturgical use. The fourth homily was probably conceived as unity and may go back to a late-antique original, presumably written in Greek. None of the homilies was authored by Athanasius himself, but they are valuable witnesses to the reception of the figure of Athanasius in later centuries,

English Summary

reflecting the needs of the Egyptian miaphysite Church following the schism of the sixth century.