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24

2018

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



Morcelliana

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**The Coptic Papyrus Codices Preserved in the *Museo Egizio*, Turin:
New Historical Acquisitions, Analysis of Codicological Features, and Strategies
for a Better Understanding and Valorization of the Library from Thi(ni)**

by
Paola Buzi

This article aims at describing the new data, which have been recently acquired concerning the arrival of the Coptic papyrus codices preserved in the *Museo Egizio*, Turin, and at the same time at illustrating the first results of an accurate autoptic codicological analysis conducted within the other scientific activities and goals of the 'PATHs' project¹.

The Turin Coptic codices represent a rare example of a well-preserved late antique institutional library that reflects the literary tastes and dogmatic orientations before what can be defined as the ninth-century Coptic book revolution², which significantly changed bookmaking in Christian Egypt³.

The progressive shift from papyrus to parchment as a writing support was a technical innovation that directly affected the number of works transmitted by a single manuscript and sometimes even its contents. In this respect, the Turin Coptic codices – probably datable between the end of the seventh century and the beginning of the eighth – are the latest known example of an Egyptian library entirely transmitted by papyrus codices, and offers a rare occasion to study the criteria by which several literary works were assembled in one codex and, at the same time, to analyse the technical features of the late Coptic papyrus book.

AMEDEO PEYRON AND HIS WORK ON THE COPTIC CODICES OF TURIN

As is well known, the Coptic literary manuscripts of Turin – consisting of a number of quasi-complete codices⁴, plus some fragments still awaiting an accurate codicological reconstruction – were purchased in Egypt by Bernardino Drovetti⁵.

In 1824, Charles Felix, the duke of Savoy, Piedmont, and Aosta and the king of Sardinia, entrusted the philologist Amedeo Peyron (Turin, 1785-1870)⁶ with the task of arranging the famous Egyptian collection of Bernardino Drovetti. Such acquisition would have rounded out the collection established about fifty years earlier by Charles Emmanuel III for the *Museo della Regia Università*. That earlier purchase constituted the first nucleus of the future *Museo Egizio*.

After having been stored at least since 1820 in two warehouses in Livorno, where it was visited by several scholars and potential buyers, the Drovetti collection was finally escorted, in 1824, to Turin with all due

¹ This research has been funded by the European Research Council, Horizon 2020 Programme, with an ERC Advanced Grant 2015 destined to support the project "Tracking Papyrus and Parchment Paths: An Archaeological Atlas of Coptic Literature. Literary Texts in their Geographical Context: Production, Copying, Usage, Dissemination and Storage", project no. 687567 [<https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/>]. I am very grateful also to Christian Greco, Director of the *Museo Egizio*, and to Susanne Töpfer, who is responsible for the papyri preserved in the museum, for making this research possible, thanks to a formal cooperation with the author of this paper within the scientific activities of the 'PATHs' project. On the project, see P. BUZI – F. BERNO – J. BOGDANI, *The 'PATHs' Project: an Effort to Represent the Physical Dimension of Coptic Literary Production (Third–Eleventh centuries)*, COMSt Bulletin 4.1 (2018) 39-58.

² P. BUZI, *The ninth-century Coptic book revolution and the emergence of Multiple-Text Manuscripts*, in *The Emergence of Multiple-Text Manuscripts*, eds. A. BAUSI, M. FRIEDRICH, M. MANIACI (Studies in Manuscript Cultures, 17), Berlin – Boston 2019, forthcoming.

³ P. BUZI, *Amedeo Peyron and the Coptic codices from This*, EDAL 5 (2015-2016) 57-67.

⁴ Normally described as seventeen codices, the Turin Coptic manuscripts are in reality at least twenty, although some of them appear in a very fragmentary status.

⁵ G. BOTTI, *La collezione Drovetti e i papiri del R. Museo Egizio in Torino*, Rendiconti Accademia dei Lincei xxx (1922) 128-315.

⁶ S. BASSI, *La vita e gli studi di Amedeo Peyron (1785-1870)*, Torino 1961; G.F. GIANOTTI, *Peyron, Amedeo Angelo Maria* in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 82 (2015), electronic version: [[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/amedeo-angelo-maria-peyron_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/amedeo-angelo-maria-peyron_(Dizionario-Biografico))] (last accessed: December 2017).

fanfare by the numismatist and conservator Giulio Cordero, the count of San Quintino (Mondovì 1778 – Turin 1857)⁷.

As one of the officially designated members responsible for the arranging of the collection, Amedeo Peyron at first concentrated his attention on thirteen Hellenistic papyri, which he published in the «Memorie della Reale Accademia delle Scienze di Torino»⁸. In the meantime, however, he had started to collaborate with Jean-François Champollion on the study of some hieroglyphic papyri, contributing in that way to the birth of Egyptology discipline in Turin⁹.

Compared to his studies devoted to philology and Greek papyrology, however, the crucial importance for the development of Coptic Studies of his research on the Coptic papyrus codices preserved in the *Museo Egizio* has passed virtually unnoticed.

Amedeo Peyron, after a first disappointment¹⁰, due to the physical conditions of the codices, gave a classification and a first codicological description of seven of them – still valid –¹¹ as he himself explains in the preface of his *Lexicon linguae copticae*¹².

Although it was Francesco Rossi who published almost the whole of the Turin Coptic codices¹³, we have now enough information to deduce that it was Amedeo Peyron who originally intended to do so. It was probably for this reason that he transferred some leaves of the Coptic papyrus codices to his residence¹⁴. Francesco Rossi informs us about the patience with which Peyron worked on the manuscripts and provides us with useful information concerning their conservation:

Con diligenza e pazienza maggiori d'ogni lode, [Peyron] condusse a termine in breve tempo il difficile compito. Fatti incollare su leggiera e trasparente carta quei fragilissimi fogli, con quella profonda conoscenza, che aveva di queste due lingue [egiziano e copto], li classificò tutti con sapiente ordine, secondo il loro contenuto, e dei papiri greci, che erano in piccolo numero, fece una quanto mai fedele ed esatta trascrizione, che venne poscia pubblicata con traduzione latina e dotti commenti nei volumi di questa Accademia. I papiri copti, che erano molto più numerosi, furono da lui divisi per materia in sette codici, di cui diede una descrizione sommaria, ma esatta, nella prefazione del suo impareggiabile *Lexicon* copto, ove egli li cita con tutte le altre fonti, a cui attinse per la compilazione di questo suo ammirabile lavoro¹⁵.

⁷ CORDERO DEI CONTI DI S. QUINTINO, *Notizie intorno alla collezione di antichità egiziane del cav. Drovetti*, *Giornale Arcadico* 19 (1823) 3-31.

⁸ A. PEYRON, *Papyri graeci Regii taurinensis Musei Aegyptii I, Taurini 1826*; ID., *Papyri graeci Regii Taurinensis Musei Aegyptii II, Taurini 1827*.

⁹ As regards the two scholars' collaboration and the invitation made by J.-F. Champollion to A. Peyron to share with other colleagues the results of their common research, see A. PEYRON, *Lexicon linguae copticae, Taurini 1835*, VIII.

¹⁰ A. PEYRON, *Saggio di studi sopra papiri, codici cofti, ed uno stele trilingue del Regio Museo Egiziano*, Torino 1824, 11.

¹¹ T. ORLANDI, *Les papyrus coptes du Musée Egyptien de Turin*, *Le Muséon* 87 (1974) 139-151.

¹² A. PEYRON, *Lexicon*, cit. xxv-xxvi.

¹³ F. ROSSI, *I papiri copti del Museo Egizio di Torino*, 2 voll., 10 fascicoli, Torino 1887-1892; ID., *Un nuovo codice copto del Museo Egizio di Torino*, *Atti Accademia dei Lincei* v (1893) 3-136. Before Rossi, Paul de Lagarde and Eugène Revillout had already published some works of the Turin collection: E. REVILLOUT, *Le Concile de Nicée, d'après les textes coptes*, *Journal Asiatique* VII (1873) 210-288; ID., *La vie du bienheureux Aphou, évêque de Pemdje (Oxyrinque)*, *Revue Égyptologique* 3 (1885) 27-33; ID., *Le martyre de St. Ignace*, *Revue Égyptologique* 3 (1885) 34-37; see also E. REVILLOUT, *Rapport sur une mission en Italie*, *Archives des Missions scientifiques et littéraires* 3/4 (1877) 444-494. On Francesco Rossi's work see R. ATKINSON, *On Professor Rossi's Publication of South-Coptic Texts*, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* III (1893-1896) 24-99.

¹⁴ Tito Orlandi, informed by Andreas Wittenburg (Munich), reveals us this habit, which is now confirmed by Peyron's papers preserved in the National Library of Turin.

¹⁵ «With a diligence and patience above and beyond the call of duty, he [i.e. Peyron] quickly carried out the difficult task. After having glued those extremely fragile sheets to light and transparent paper, he used his profound knowledge of these two languages [i.e. *Egyptian and Coptic*] to classify all them in an intelligent manner according to their contents, and he made an extremely faithful and precise transcription of the few Greek papyri that there were, publishing them with a Latin translation and erudite notes in the volumes of this Academy [i.e. *Accademia delle Scienze di Torino*]. The Coptic papyri, which were much more numerous, were subdivided into seven codices according to subject, and he gave a brief but correct description of them in the preface to his incomparable *Coptic Lexicon*, where he cites them together with all of the other sources that he drew upon in compiling this admirable work». F. ROSSI, *Trascrizione di alcuni testi copti tratti dai papiri del Museo Egizio di Torino*, *Memorie Accademia delle Scienze di Torino* II.36 (1884) 3-4.

We learn, therefore, that Amedeo Peyron made use of the texts transmitted by the codices of Turin to extract *lemmata* to be used for the realization of his *Lexicon*, which was a work that was mainly conceived to contribute to the study of the Egyptian language¹⁶. In this respect, it should be stressed that Amedeo Peyron was one of the pioneers to arrange the *lemmata* of a Coptic dictionary according to the roots, a not following the simple alphabetic order.

In brief, the composition of the *Lexicon linguae copticae*¹⁷ and of the *Grammatica linguae copticae*¹⁸, that are widely recognized as milestones in the history of Coptic studies¹⁹, strongly depend on the classification and cataloguing of the Coptic manuscripts of Turin²⁰.

In the *Note e giudizi delle proprie opere dell'Ab. Amedeo Peyron*, the Turin scholar himself explains his work, revealing at the same time his pride at the results achieved and hardly hiding his severe reserves towards the work of Henry Tattam, who had had just published another lexicon of Coptic language:

Impiegai dieci anni in questo lavoro ingrattissimo. Ben io sapeva, che il Silvestre Sacy in una sua *Memoria* letta all'Istituto di Francia aveva riprovato il consiglio di seguitare l'ordine analitico delle radici nella formazione di un lessico Copto, tuttavia io seguitai quest'ordine nel mio *Lexicon*. Il Sacy fu talmente leale, che nel rendere conto del mio Lessico nel *Journal des Savants, mars 1836*, pag. 147, lodò il mio metodo. Contemporaneamente al mio comparve in Oxford, 1835, il *Lexicon Aegyptiaco-Latinum* di Enrico Tattam; egli stesso in Parigi me ne fece cortese dono, ed io, lui presente, notai nelle sole prime pagine errori non lievi. Il suo Lessico morì appena nato, il mio fu accettato e seguito da tutti. Il Tattam era un pensionato dell'Università di Oxford, che viveva beatamente facendo lavorare la sua figlia più che ventenne; questa in Parigi copiava i manoscritti Copti, e somministrava il materiale a suo padre, che anche ad ora tarda si godeva le oziose piume. La figlia meritava rispetto per la sua scienza Copta²¹.

This brief summary has just the aim to illustrate what there is behind the well-known work of Francesco Rossi, whose edition of most of the Turin texts – with all its limits – is still extremely useful.

There is no need, on the other hand, to explain here the pivotal importance of the work of Tito Orlandi on the Turin codices, in terms of both classification and edition. His two articles, published in 1974 and in 2013 respectively²², not only represent the best comprehensive study and *status quaestionis* of this set of manuscripts, but are the basis of any further study and edition.

Concerning this last aspect, it is useful to report that there are several scholars who at the moment are working at the edition or re-edition of the texts transmitted by the Turin codices. Among the others, Jean-Daniel Dubois is preparing a new edition of the *Acta Pilati* (Codex II), Christian Bull and Alexandros

¹⁶ S. DONADONI, *Il copto del Peyron*, in *Giornata di studio in onore di Amedeo Peyron* (Torino, 4 ottobre 1996), a cura di S. CURTO, Firenze 1998, 27-32.

¹⁷ A. PEYRON, *Lexicon*, cit.

¹⁸ A. PEYRON, *Grammatica linguae copticae*, Taurini 1841.

¹⁹ Both works were based on the teaching received from Tommaso Valperga di Caluso (Turin, 1737-1815) – who, under the pseudonym of Didymus Taurinensis, had published a pioneering work entitled *Litteraturae copticae rudimentum*. T. VALPERGA DI CALUSO, *Litteraturae copticae rudimentum*, Taurini 1783.

²⁰ For a description of the Egyptian collection of Turin in the period of the arrival of the Coptic codices see G. CORDERO DI SAN QUINTINO, *Notizie intorno alla collezione di antichità egiziane del cav. Drovetti*, *Giornale Arcadico* XIX (1823), 3-31; G. BOTTI, *La collezione Drovetti e i papiri del R. Museo Egizio in Torino*, *Rendiconti Accademia dei Lincei* xxx (1921) 128-149; R.T. RIDLEY, *Drovetti Bernardino*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 41 (1992) 712-716; S. CURTO, *Carlo Vidua e il Museo Egizio di Torino*, *Studi Piemontesi* 16 (1987) 437-444.

²¹ «I spent ten years in this ungrateful task. I was well aware that, in a *Memoire* which he read at the French Institute, Silvestre Sacy had criticized the plan of following the analytical order of the roots in forming a Coptic lexicon. However, I followed this order in my *Lexicon*. Sacy was so honest that he praised my method when reviewing my *Lexicon* in the *Journal des Savants, mars 1836*, page 147. At the same time as mine, there appeared at Oxford in 1835 the *Lexicon Aegyptiaco-Latinum* of Henry Tattam. In Paris he kindly made a gift of it to me, and, in his presence, I observed that in just the first pages there were errors of no small importance. His *Lexicon* died newborn, whereas mine was accepted and used by everyone. Tattam was a retired professor of Oxford University who led a happy life by giving work to his daughter in her early twenties. She copied the Coptic manuscripts in Paris, and furnished the material to her father who loved to work even late into the night. Tattam's daughter deserved respect for her knowledge of Coptic». A. PEYRON, *Note e giudizi delle proprie opere*, contained in B. PEYRON, *Per le nozze di Teresa Peyron – Melchior Pulciano*, Torino 1879, 15.

²² T. ORLANDI, *Les papyrus coptes du Musée Egyptien*, cit.; T. ORLANDI, *The Turin Coptic papyri*, Aug. 53 (2013) 501-530.

Tzakos are working at the *Vita Epiphani* (Codex XV), Tito Orlandi himself is studying, with Awad Wadi, the *In Athanasium* attributed to Cyril of Alexandria (Codex XIV), and, lastly, Alberto Camplani and Federico Contardi are using the Turin version of the *Canones Basilii* (Codex XIII) for the edition of the same work transmitted by a codex found in Thebes²³.

Although the object of several specific studies – mainly philological, however –, the Coptic papyrus codices of Turin have still much to say and the following pages try to illustrate the research activities which have been planned within the 'PATHs' project, in agreement with the director of the Museo Egizio, Christian Greco, and in collaboration with Tito Orlandi, in order to valorize them and to make them better known.

ON THE PROVENANCE OF THE COPTIC PAPYRUS CODICES OF TURIN

If the exact provenance of the Turin codices, as well as the origin of the copious unidentified literary fragments of the Turin collection of Coptic literary manuscripts, does not seem to be not explicitly mentioned in any modern document or report, a provenance from Thi (or Thin, or Thinis), the modern Ġirgā²⁴, is highly sustainable, and in fact has been already compellingly proposed by Tito Orlandi and by others.

A book-list pertaining to one codex – that for the remaining part has disappeared – mentions the property of the cathedral of Thi(ni)s, which fact makes it quite reasonable to deduce that the entire group of codices had its origins in that ecclesiastical and cultural institution. The book-list in question is transmitted by Ms. Provv. 6266²⁵ and contains a scribal subscription informing us about the owner institution, the «catholic church» of Thi(ni)s (ἸΤΚΑΘΟΛΙΚΗ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΝΤΙΝ) and the identity of the copyist, the «humblest reader» (ΠΕΛΛΑΧΙΣΤΟΣ ΝΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΤΗΣ) Geōrgios. A numbered list of the contents of the lost book follows (ΝΑΪ ΝΕΤΣΗΖ ΕΠΕΙΧΘΩΜΕ)²⁶.

No less important is Ms. Provv. 8548²⁷, a single leaf that carries only the scribal subscription – a prayer on behalf of the donor of the manuscript –, which very likely concluded a codex. Another possibility, according to Tito Orlandi's opinion²⁸, is that this last fragment represented a model to be used to write colophons. In any case, in such text an anonymous woman is said to have donated a book to the monastery of St. John the Baptist in Thi(ni)s (ΕΠΤΟΠΟΣ Ἰ[Π]ΙΖΑΓΙΟΣ ΑΓΑ [Ι]ΩΖΑΜΝΗΣ ΠΒΑΠΤΙΣΤΗΣ ἸΤΙΝ). Eugène Revillout, the first scholar to deal with the document, informs us that Ms. Provv. 8548 was originally found with the leaves (*en tête de la masse*) of Codex III, while van Lantschoot's reading of the slightly damaged toponym following the mention of the *topos* quoted in Ms. Provv. 8548 confirms a provenance of the Turin codices from Thi(ni)s²⁹.

It is possible that the «catholic church» mentioned in the first colophon was part of the monastery (?) of St. John the Baptist cited by the second document, as Ewa Wipszycka suggested³⁰.

²³ A. CAMPLANI – F. CONTARDI, *The Canons attributed to Basil of Caesarea. A New Coptic Codex*, in *Coptic Society, Literature and Religion from Late Antiquity to Modern Times. Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Coptic Studies, Rome, September 17th-22nd, 2012, and Plenary Reports of the Ninth International Congress of Coptic Studies, Cairo, September 15th-19th, 2008*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 247, a cura di P. BUZI, A. CAMPLANI, F. CONTARDI, Louvain 2016, 970-992; A. CAMPLANI – F. CONTARDI, *Remarks on the Textual Contribution of the Coptic codices preserving the Canons of Saint Basil, with Edition of the Ordination Rite for the Bishop (Canon 46)*, in *Philologie, Herméneutique et Histoire des Textes entre Orient et Occident. Mélanges en hommage à Sever Voicu*, éd. di F.P. BARONE, C. MACÉ, P.A. UBIERNA, Turnhout 2017, 139-159.

²⁴ About this place see TRMM, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten in arabischer Zeit*, I-VI, Wiesbaden 2007, VI, 2682-2685.

²⁵ A. VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Recueil des colophons*, Louvain 1929, I.1, 180-181, n° CV.

²⁶ P. BUZI – J. BOGDANI – N. CARLIG – M.C. GIORDA – A. SOLDATI, 'Tracking Papyrus and Parchment Paths': A New International Project on Coptic Literature, *Rivista del Museo Egizio* 1 (2018) [https://rivista.museoegizio.it/article_category/volume-1-2017/]

²⁷ E. REVILLOUT, *Le Concile de Nicée d'après les textes coptes*, VII.1 (1873) 218-219; A. VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Recueil des colophons*, cit., 181-182, n° CVI.

²⁸ Expressed orally, on the occasion of the conference "The Coptic book between the 6th and the 8th century", Rome, 21-22 September 2017.

²⁹ See Orlandi, *Les papyrus coptes*, p. 116, as well as Orlandi, *The Turin Coptic Papyri*, 525.

³⁰ I am grateful to Ewa Wipszycka for confirming this hypothesis, again on the occasion of the conference "The Coptic book between the 6th and the 8th century" (21 September 2017). On the "catholic church" in Coptic sources see E.

The edition and English translation of these two scribal subscriptions is part of the work carried out by Agostino Soldati for the 'PATHs' project. A complete census and edition – both traditional and electronic, the latter destined to be hosted by the 'PATHs' database – of all the colophons preserved in the Coptic manuscripts between the 3rd and the 11th centuries is one of the aims of the project³¹.

OTHER LEAVES BELONGING TO THE THI(NI)S LIBRARY: EXPLORATION OF THE 'HIDDEN TREASURES' OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF TURIN AND OF THE STOREROOMS OF THE MUSEO EGIZIO

We now know, thanks to the exploration of the "Fondo Peyron" of the National Library of Turin (BNT), that not only took Amedeo Peyron some leaves of the codices from Thi(ni)s to his residence, in order to study them, but also that he owned an indeterminable number of fragments – literary and documentary – which he had received directly from Drovetti. Unfortunately, it is not possible to ascertain more precisely when this donation took place, because most of the papers and notes of Peyron's dossier have no date. Among the materials of the "Fondo Peyron" of the National Library of Turin, for instance, there is a folder classified as «Gnosticismo», where we read:

Un consimile papiro, donatomi dal cav. Drovetti, contiene pure una preghiera indiritta al Padre onnipotente, alla mente nascosta del Padre ...³²

It was Peyron himself who donated his papers and some manuscripts to the National Library of Turin, but unfortunately in the night between 25 and 26 January 1904 a fire destroyed part of the section of the library where Greek and Oriental manuscripts were preserved. The remaining part of Amedeo Peyron's archive, together with the library and the documents of other members of the family, originally preserved in a private property in Cavour, near Turin, was sold to the Italian State in 1969.

The "Fondo Peyron" documents the activities of the Peyron family in the period between Bernardino Drovetti (1780-1865) and Peyron's homonymous grandnephew (1904-1937) and is articulated in several sections, each of them pertaining to a member of the family. A complete inventory of it was completed only in 1993³³, a fact that explains why it still largely remains to be explored by specialists.

The part of the archive dedicated to Amedeo is subdivided into several thematic sections³⁴. In that section denominated "Egittologia e coptologia", the following documents are to be found:

Papiri documentari e iscrizioni greco-egizie³⁵
 Papiri demotici³⁶
 Scrittura ieratica e geroglifica³⁷
 Copto³⁸

WIPSYZKA, *Katholikai et les autres épithètes qualifiant le nom ἐκκλησία. Contribution à l'ordre hiérarchique des église dans l'Égypte byzantine*, JJP 24 (1994) 203-224 and M.C. GIORDA, *Monachesimo e istituzioni scolastiche in Egitto. Alcuni casi di interazione e di integrazione*, Bologna 2010, 37.

³¹ In a second phase, meaningful textual elements – such as names and professions of copyists, names of commissioners and patrons, places, architectural typologies, ethnic groups, etc. – will be extrapolated from the electronic edition of colophons, my means of tags, in order to provide valuable information to sketch a geography of the book production. The same method, for the same purposes, will be applied also to the electronic edition of titles.

³² «A similar papyrus that was donated to me by cav. Drovetti contains a prayer addressed to the Almighty Father, to the hidden mind of the Father...». BNT, Fondo Peyron, «Amedeo», Mss. 196, not-numbered leaf, *sine data*.

³³ A complete inventory of the "Fondo Peyron" (299 pages) is preserved in the National Library of Turin, Section of Manuscripts and Rare Books (BNT, Cons. Mss. 8 Gallo 2).

³⁴ The section of the "Fondo" pertaining to Amedeo includes 16 manuscripts of different origin, which give a clear idea of his multiform interests: 7 manuscripts in Hebraic language, some of which are liturgical; a manuscript of the 18th century preserving a Syriac grammar in Latin translation, originally belonging to Tommaso Valperga di Caluso; an Arabic manuscript of liturgical contents; a Copto-Arabic manuscript; 2 Greek manuscripts of the 14th century belonging to Amedeo Peyron; 2 Latin manuscripts; a 15th century-manuscript containing the *Life of Niccolò Acciaiuoli* by Matteo Palmieri; a 17th century English manuscript with biblical meditations.

³⁵ BNT, Fondo Peyron, «Amedeo», Mss. 129-134, 160. This section also includes transcriptions and notes used for the realization of *Papyri Graeci Regii Taurinensis Musei Aegyptii*.

³⁶ BNT, Fondo Peyron, «Amedeo», Mss. 129-134, 160.

³⁷ BNT, Fondo Peyron, «Amedeo», Mss. 129-134, 160.

³⁸ Among the other documents and papers, this section includes: a draft and an incomplete version of the *Lexicon lin-*

From these papers, we learn, for instance, that Amedeo Peyron was well acquainted with the collection of Henry Salt, which he had visited in Livorno in 1826 thanks to the intercession of Jean François Champollion³⁹. The archive also includes transcriptions of articles and works by Jean-François Champollion, Thomas Young⁴⁰, Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy (1758-1838)⁴¹, and others⁴², all of them testifying to the solid network of scholarly relationships maintained by the Turin scholar with several international colleagues, mainly Egyptologists.

The most important 'discovery' in the "Fondo Peyron", however – due to the work of Paolo De Silvestri⁴³ –, is that of two leaves (BNT, Peyron, Ms. 157)⁴⁴ belonging to one of the papyrus codices from Thi(ni)s⁴⁵, which transmit a passage of the *Vita Athanasii*, edited by Francesco Rossi and later Tito Orlandi⁴⁶, both of whom did not know of the existence of these fragments when they published the text.

The two leaves (see the Appendix to this article), which correspond to pages 35-38 of Codex IX and measure 313 x 222 mm 307 x 226 mm max. respectively, are to be added to two other unpublished leaves from the same codex, identified with the label "Dono Peyron - 1983" and preserved under glass in the *papiroteca* of the *Museo Egizio*, but in a different dresser from that where the Thi(ni)s codices are stored. Although the page numbers are not very readable, it is reasonable to infer that they correspond to pages 25-28 of Codex IX and again they were not known to Rossi or Orlandi.

Moreover, in the cupboards of the Museo Egizio several other little Coptic fragments, in part certainly from the same Thi(ni)s codices, are preserved. Some of them had already been seen and analyzed in the 1970s by Tito Orlandi, while some others, preserved in cardboard folders, still have to be completely explored, because nobody was aware of their existence until some months ago.

Unfortunately, both Bernardino Drovetti and Amedeo Peyron are very laconic concerning the exact circumstances of the acquisition of all these manuscripts, an aspect that the 'PATHs' project is trying to clarify⁴⁷. What is sure, however, is that the Coptic papyri seem to be mentioned for the first time in an unpublished letter that Carlo Vidua – who convinced Drovetti to sell his Egyptian collection gathered in Upper Egypt to the Savoy family – sent to the count Prospero Balbo⁴⁸. This report mentions about 3,000 items, including

guae Copticae with several notes destined to the writing of *Grammatica linguae Copticae*; a printed copy of the *Lexicon* with personal notes; the transcription of some texts of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, copied on the occasion of a trip to Paris in 1836; notes to the Catalogue of the Borgian Coptic manuscripts written by Georg Zoëga; notes on manuscripts received as a gift by Bernardino Drovetti; fragments of papyrus and paper Coptic manuscripts; a magical text (Peyron, Mss. 158-159) and a not identified fragment.

³⁹ Peyron was morally committed with Champollion not to publish or circulate the papyri that he could study only thanks to his intercession.

⁴⁰ BNT, *Fondo Peyron*, «Amedeo», Mss. 227, 13.

⁴¹ BNT, *Fondo Peyron*, «Amedeo», Mss. 226, 104.

⁴² Jean Antoine Letronne (1787-1848), BNT, *Fondo Peyron*, «Amedeo», Mss. 226, 67. and Philipp Karl Buttmann (1764-1829), BNT, *Fondo Peyron*, «Amedeo», Mss. 135, 1-3.

⁴³ In 2009 Paolo De Silvestri had carried out, under my supervision, a research on the "Fondo Peyron" in the National Library of Turin. His premature deceases, at the age of 43 (2012), has unfortunately prevented him from collecting the fruits of his efforts.

⁴⁴ The leaves are numbered with a modern label from 36 to 38; one of them is not numbered. In the folder preserving the leaves there is also a drawing declared as a reproduction of p. 37, which however is a graphic reproduction of p. 35.

⁴⁵ Museo Egizio 63.000, Codex IX = Codex CML (= Coptic Literary Manuscript) ID 54, according to the classification of the 'PATHs' project = Codex GIOV.AJ, according to the classification of the Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari (CMCL) [<http://www.cmcl.it/>] (last accessed: November 2017). It corresponds to number 7119, according to A. FABRETTI – F. ROSSI – R.V. LANZONE, *Catalogo generale dei musei di antichità e degli oggetti d'arte raccolti nelle gallerie e biblioteche del Regno edito per cura del Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione. Serie Prima - Piemonte*, II, Roma 1888, 310.

⁴⁶ F. ROSSI, *I Papiri copti del Museo Egizio*, cit., 3-136; T. ORLANDI, *Testi copti. 1. Encomio di Atanasio, 2. Vita di Atanasio*, Milano-Varese 1968; ID., *Les papyrus coptes du Musée Égyptien*, cit., 115-127. The *Vita Athanasii* (6th century) is transmitted also by codex MONB.GY (= CLM 418) and by few other fragments: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Copt. C31; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Copt. E28, f. 2 and Wien, Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek, K 2941A-I.

⁴⁷ Maria Chiara Giorda, in particular, has explored – and is still exploring – the archives and documents of the *Museo Egizio* itself and of the *Accademia delle Scienze di Torino*, discovering new elements related to the way the codices reached Turin.

⁴⁸ Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, PVC, II, *Lettera a Prospero Balbo*, Torino 29 Ottobre 1822. R. COALOA, *Carlo Vidua romantico atipico*, Casale Monferrato 2003, 130-131. On Vidua see S. CURTO, *Carlo Vidua e il Museo Egizio di Torino*,

the papyrus Coptic manuscripts.

It remains to be clarified, on the other hand, the provenance of the parchment Coptic book (Ms. Provv. 7117)⁴⁹ which was published by Paul de Lagarde in 1883⁵⁰ and was already mentioned in the anonymous “Catalogue de la collection d’antiquités de mons. le chev. Drovetti” (1822)⁵¹. Was it purchased with the papyrus codices? Was it originally part of the same library of the papyrus codices? Answering to these questions would contribute to delineating more precisely the nature and the entity of the Thi(ni)s library. Moreover, seven papyrus codices are listed in the just mentioned anonymous catalogue⁵² and these are very likely the same manuscripts which are described by Peyron in his *Lexicon*, but why the other codices are not mentioned? Were they acquired slightly later? It is clear that much remains to be clarified.

THE CODICOLOGICAL FEATURES OF SOME CODICES

Already before the official starting of the ‘PATHs’ project, a formal agreement between the direction of the *Museo Egizio* on the one side and the author of these pages on the other for the realization of an analytical catalogue of the Coptic codices from Thi(ni)s had been established. The new energies and competences acquired thanks to ‘PATHs’ permit to plan an even more detailed study of the Turin manuscripts, not only of the literary aspects of their texts, but also of their material features.

It is superfluous to stress the enormous importance of the possibility to analyze a consistent group of manuscripts characterized by the same writing support – unless it will be found out that the parchment codex published by de Lagarde was also part of the same library – and by a common provenance – whose geographical identification is almost sure, as we have seen –, and by a certain number of scribes, whose hands are very marked and defined, manuscripts that have reasonably been manufactured in the same atelier or at least in workshops located not too far from one another.

In brief, the study of this library will contribute to the advancement of what we know about the papyrus Coptic book that is still lacking a systematic and diachronic study.

Two missions for autoptic analysis of the codicological features of Codices I-X have been carried out in April and October 2017 respectively⁵³, and thanks to them it was possible to elaborate a detailed codicological description of this first group of codices. It turned out that they are less regular than they appear at a first look, also in terms of composition of quires. Moreover, very often the fibres of the codices show manufacturing defects or negligences.

Studi Piemontesi 16 (1987) 437-444.

⁴⁹ The codex is bound in a modern (beginning of the 19th century?) leather bookbinding that collects in reality three different codicological units: 1) CC 0762, *Syrach*, 0,30-33, 1,1.3-51,30; CC 0761, *Liber Sapientiae* 1,1-19,22 (= sa 98); 2) CC 0761, *Ps.* 101,4-29 (= sa 99); 3) CC 0762, *Syrach* 0,1-22.24-25; 1,1-2 (= sa 100). K. SCHÜSSLER, *Biblia Coptica. Die koptischen Bibeltexte, Band I. Das sahidische Alte und Neue Testament. Lieferung 4: sa 93-120*, Wiesbaden 2000, 21-24. It is interesting to observe that de Lagarde had seen the codex when it had already been bound in the modern volume. Remaining of the original bookbinding of the first codicological unit and of its wooden plates are preserved with the call numbers Provv. 7117/1 and 7117/2.

⁵⁰ P.A. DE LAGARDE, *Aegyptiaca*, Gottingae 1883, nos 3-4.

⁵¹ This catalogue is contained in *Documenti inediti per servire alla storia dei Musei d’Italia* v. III, Firenze-Roma 1880. The parchment codex is marked by no. 145.

⁵² These are marked by nos. 125-131.

⁵³ Such autoptic analysis was conducted at first by Agostino Soldati, Maria Chiara Giorda and the author of these pages in April 2017 and then by Nathan Carlig and again the author of this article from 23 to 26 October 2017. Both visits were prepared and followed by an accurate study of the photographs, kindly provided by the Museo Egizio. After the conclusion of this article, two more missions have been carried out by Nathan Carlig (22-26 October 2018 and 22-24 January 2019), who is charged with the codicological chapter of the future catalogue dedicated to this ancient library.

In Codex I⁵⁴ the fibres are heavily damaged, above all the horizontal ones (Fig. 1). Moreover, the codex makes use of a mixed system of page ordering that combines pagination and foliation.



Fig. 1 - Turin, Museo Egizio, Codex I, f. 13r.

⁵⁴ CLM 45; GIOV.AA, according to the CMCL classification.

Codex III⁵⁵ shows that the making of the codex is not always accurate and that the rolls from which the *bifolii* have been obtained are sometimes re-used. For the making of f. 25, which corresponds to pages 75-76 (οε/ος), for instance, a protocol has been re-used (Fig. 2). This causes an unaesthetic mixed direction of the fibres on the same page. The presence of a protocol, however, is extremely interesting, because it testifies to the fact that the Thi(ni)s codices cannot be dated before the second half of the 7th century.



Fig. 2 - Turin, Museo Egizio, Codex III, f. 25v

⁵⁵ CLM 47; GIOV.AC according to the CMCL classification.

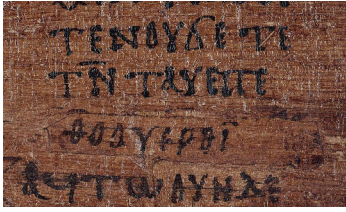


Fig. 3 - Turin, Museo Egizio, Codex II, f. 17v

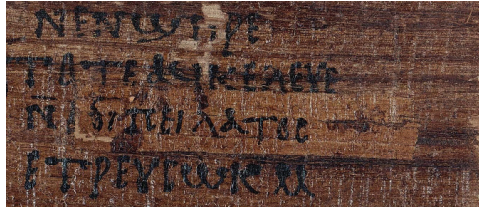


Fig. 4 - Turin, Museo Egizio, Codex II, f. 18r

In Codex V⁵⁶ the fibres are often irregular and corrugated. This is the case, for instance, of f. 5 (Jerome the Presbyter, *Vita Hilarionis*). Codex II⁵⁷ shows several restorations or, better, integrations of the fibres, obtained by means of little strips of papyrus, and re-writings of small sections of the text⁵⁸ (Figg. 3-4). In Codex VI⁵⁹ the fragment preserved under glass 6 was repaired with a strip whose fibres are oriented differently from those of the page (Fig. 5).⁶⁰ Moreover, *kollēseis* are very frequent and very visible (13 *kollēseis* are visible in Codex I, while 10 in Codex IV), that is another sign of the fact that the choice of the material used for these codices was not always of the best quality. These very preliminary observations of the physical features of the Turin codices will be corroborated by the next missions destined to codicological study⁶¹. Moreover, in 2018 the first mission destined to archaeometric analyses of the inks will be conducted in collaboration with the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (Hamburg University) and the Bundesanstalt für Materialforschung und -prüfung (BAM, Berlin)⁶².

The library of Thi(ni)s represents a crucial and transitional moment in the history of Coptic books, which saw on the one hand the creation of new codicological and palaeographical features and on the other the definitive affirmation of multiple-text codices.

The layout of the codices is normally in two columns – with five exceptions – the writing is in evolution, and the titles always stand before the works they refer to. *Subscriptions* (or final titles) occasionally survive, but no longer represent the main titles. As for the contents, there is a meaningful presence of Greek patristic works translated into Coptic in the fifth century (the so-called “classical translations”, according to Tito Orlandi’s classification), some apocrypha (such as the *Acta Pilati*), old-style works that reflect the theological controversies of the end of the 4th century (for instance, the *Vita Aphou*, transmitted exclusively by a Turin codex), some original works of the 6th century (such as Damian of Alexandria, *De Nativitate*), a few pseudoepigraphal works and a selection of normative works, such as the *Gnomai Concilii Nicaeni*, and last but not least the *De iudicio* of Shenoute, which represents, so far, the most ancient manuscript

⁵⁶ CLM 49; GIOV.AE according to the CMCL classification.

⁵⁷ CLM 46; GIOV.AB according to the CMCL classification.

⁵⁸ For instance on f. 15v.

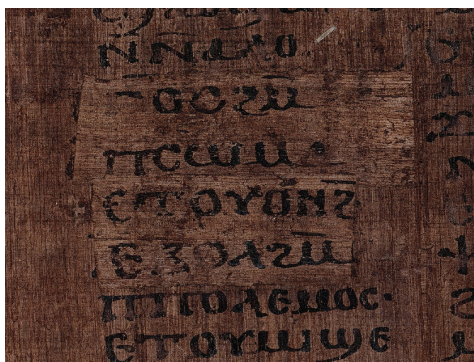
⁵⁹ CLM 50; GIOV.AF according to the CMCL classification.

⁶⁰ According to Alin Suciu the integrations could have been caused by the necessity of correcting the text (personal communication, 17.09.2018), although no similar cases are known.

⁶¹ In parallel with the cataloguing of the Coptic papyrus codices, Agostino Soldati has been charged with the edition of unpublished Greek and Coptic documentary fragments – mainly private letters of monastic context and administrative documents, apparently from the Memphite nome –, studying which he found out that W.E. Crum knew very well these texts and made use of them for some of the entries of his dictionary.

⁶² Tea Ghigo, a PhD student supervised in cotutelle by Oliver Hahn and Ira Rabin for Hamburg University and myself for Sapienza University of Rome, is charged with the above mentioned archaeometric analyses. On 6 October 2017 preliminary measurements of a selection of fragments have been conducted, in my presence, by Ira Rabin and Myriam Krutzsch, who made use of a Dino-Lite digital microscope. In May 2018 Tea Ghigo has integrated first results with other measurements, by means of XRF and Raman techniques. For the first results of these two sessions of analyses see T. GHIGO ET AL., *An Attempt at a Systematic Study of Inks from Coptic Manuscripts*, *Manuscript Cultures* 11 (2018) 157-164.

transmitting a work of Shenoute⁶³. It is useless to stress how important is the presence of this work in the Thi(ni)s codices for the reconstruction of the dissemination of the works of the archimandrite of Atripe. For all these reasons it is essential to go deeper in the codicological, palaeographical and philological analysis of Turin codices, in order to better define the history and the context in which they were produced, used, stored and circulated.



Turin, Museo Egizio, Fig. 5 - Codex VI, glass 67 r

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Abstract. This article aims at describing the first results of accurate autoptic codicological analyses conducted on the papyrus codices preserved in the *Museo Egizio*, Turin, within the other scientific activities and goals of the 'PATHs' project (Rome). The Turin codices represent a rare example of a well-preserved late antique institutional library that reflects the literary tastes and dogmatic orientations before what can be defined as the ninth-century Coptic book revolution, which significantly changed bookmaking in Christian Egypt. The definitive shift from papyrus to parchment as a writing support was a technical innovation that directly affected the number of works transmitted by a single manuscript and sometimes even its contents. In this respect, the Turin codices – probably datable between the end of the seventh century and the beginning of the eighth – are the latest known example of an Egyptian library entirely transmitted by papyrus codices, and offers a rare occasion to study the criteria by which several literary works were assembled in one codex. Moreover, the edition of two unpublished leaves of Codex IX, preserved in the National Library of Turin, is provided.

Keywords. Coptic literature, Coptic libraries, papyrus codices, codicology, This/Thinis.

⁶³ A. BOUD'HORS, *Réflexions sur l'existence d'une littérature pseudo-chénoutienne en copte*, in *Philologie, herméneutique, et histoire des textes entre Orient et Occident*, cit., 121-138.