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Two More Pages of Crosby-Schøyen Codex MS 193: A Pachomian Easter Lectionary?

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Abstract

Edition of two additional pages of Crosby-Schøyen Codex MS 193. They continue the hitherto unidentified last tractate 5. Perhaps this was the conclusion of a putative Pachomian Easter lectionary.

Introduction

Among the unpublished Coptic papyri of the Chester Beatty Library (Dublin) is a frame containing four fragments in Sahidic, hereby assigned the designation Papyrus Chester Beatty 2026.1 With the possible exception of the fourth and smallest fragment, they are part of a single papyrus leaf of rather small dimensions, belonging to the well-known Crosby-Schøyen Codex MS 193 and, more particularly, to its fifth and final tractate, hereafter called tractate 5.2 That fragments of this codex ended up in the possession of Sir Alfred Chester Beatty need not occasion surprise, given that several other manuscripts as well, thought to belong to the Dishna discovery of 1952, are divided between

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1 Albert Pietersma, “Chester Beatty Papyri,” in Anchor Bible Dictionary 1: 901-903, here B.3.b.(4). The authors are grateful to the Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library for permission to publish this text and to an anonymous BASP referee for its proper identification. Also a warm thank-you to James Goehring for his generous help, not least for the relevant digital images of CS Codex MS 193. Without his kind assistance we could not have managed.

2 For the editio princeps of this codex see James E. Goehring, The Crosby-Schøyen Codex MS 193 in the Schøyen Collection (Leuven 1990). The first description of the codex is William H. Willis, “The New Collections of Papyri at the University of Mississippi,” in Proceedings of the 9th International Congress of Papyrology (Oxford 1961) 381-392. We have not succeeded in assigning any of the hitherto unidentified fragments of the codex to tractate 5. Page 46, however, contains new unidentified fragments from the Chester Beatty Library that seem to belong to CS 193. However, the only reason for including them here is to make them publicly available.
the Chester Beatty Library and the Bibliothèque Bodmer (Cologny-Geneva), the major repository of this find. It has been argued that the so-called Dishna papers hail from the library of the Pachomian monastery at Pbow, modern Fāw Qiblī.

**Numbers, Measurements, and Dates**

The original page size of P. Chester Beatty 2026 will have been ca. 14.7 cm high x 15.9 cm wide, but whereas the two preceding pages of tractate 5 count 12 lines of text per page, our two pages have only 10. Lines have 17.5 letters on average and, throughout the tractate, segments of text are marked off by spaces, sometimes preceded by a dicolon. The Chester Beatty pages, however, show no evidence of the dicolon. Thus here as elsewhere, the codex’s copyist was not consistent in his practice.

According to James Robinson, the paleographical date assigned to the codex as a whole ranges from the late second century AD to ca. 400, and the aspects of its makeup pertinent to tractate 5 are as follows. The codex is comprised of a single-quire, the first eight sheets of which have the side with the fibres running vertically (↓) facing up. As a result, the first sixteen pages have a recto/verso (→↓) order, while the last sixteen, including tractate 5, have the reverse (↓→). Since tractate 5 commences on sheet seven, leaf recto (→), assigned page number 124, its opening two lines are on a page with fibres running horizontally (→). Thereafter, however, the page order of the tractate is verso/recto (↓→). According to both William Willis and James Robinson the codex originally had 68 leaves or 136 pages.

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3 For the manuscript find see James M. Robinson, *The Pachomian Monastic Library at the Chester Beatty and the Bibliothèque Bodmer* (Claremont, CA 1990), and “The Manuscript’s History and Codicology,” in Goehring (n. 2) xix-xlvii (see p. xxxvi for fragments of the codex formerly in the possession of Bibliothèque Bodmer).

4 Robinson, *The Pachomian Monastic Library* (n. 3) and “The Manuscript’s History” (n. 3).

5 Cf. Robinson, “The Manuscript’s History” (n. 3) xliii-xliv. Willis (n. 2) 387 gives the general dimensions as 14.6 cm high x 15.2 cm wide.

6 Robinson, “The Manuscript’s History” (n. 3) xxxiii. See also Willis (n. 2) 389, who himself prefers the third century.

7 Since the codex lacks continuous pagination, scholars have assigned it for the sake of convenience. We use the assigned system unless otherwise indicated.

8 Since 17 and 26 are half sheets the total number of pages is 136 pages rather than 140; see Robinson, “The Manuscript’s History” (n. 3) xliv.
Contents and Pagination

Leaf 13 is the first complete leaf in the codex. Although the recto (→) side of this leaf is the 25th page (judged by the stubs at the spine), its Coptic page number is \( \text{ⲓⲑ} \) (\( = 19 \)). Thus the first text, Melito’s On the Passover, must have started on leaf 4 recto (→) or page 7, seemingly leaving the first six pages blank\(^9\) or possibly inscribed with a short treatise.\(^10\) Either way, the supposition of six spare pages at the beginning of the codex is open to question. As Robinson notes, given that the fragments placed on pages 7/8 are preceded, in Greek copies of Melito’s text, by the equivalent of \( \text{ca.} \) two pages of Coptic text, Melito’s homily must have begun not on page 7 but on page 5, thus leaving a maximum of four pages blank (or otherwise inscribed) at the front of the codex.\(^11\)

It bears noting, however, that consistency, including in pagination, was not the copyist’s strongest suit. The first two tractates (On the Passover and Jewish Martyrs) are paginated continuously, but with the third one (Epistle of Peter) pagination was started over on a new page. Similarly, the fourth tractate (Jonah the Prophet) begins with page \( \text{ⲁ} \) (\( = 1 \)), but, this time, 1 Peter and Jonah respectively end and begin on the same page. While tractate 5 begins on the same page on which Jonah ends, namely, page 124 of the assigned enumeration, there is no way of knowing whether pagination continued or was started over. Last but not least is the fact that page numbers \( \text{ⲛ} \) (\( = 50 \)) and \( \text{ⲛⲁ} \) (\( = 51 \)) are used twice, thus reducing the count by two pages.\(^12\)

If, rather than accepting \( \text{ⲓⲑ} \) (\( = 19 \)) at face value, we posit a similar mistake of duplicate page numbers in the early part of the codex, the count is reduced by another two, thus limiting the number prior to Melito’s text to one leaf or two pages. Alternatively, one might postulate two flyleaves or four pages at both the front and the back of the codex, as has been postulated, for example, for Mississippi Coptic Codex II.\(^13\) Either way, there is no good reason to believe that the codex had uninscribed pages apart from the flyleaves. Accordingly, we have numbered the concluding tractate no. 5 rather than no. 6, as Robinson does. Tractate 5, as noted, begins on page 124 and, if Robinson’s postulate of a

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\(^9\) Willis (n. 2) 384.

\(^10\) Robinson, “The Manuscript’s History (n. 3) xlvi.

\(^11\) Robinson, “The Manuscript’s History” (n. 3) xlvi. See also Goehring (n. 2) 4, n. 13. Counting Greek words rather than lines produces the same results.

\(^12\) Goehring (n. 2) lii, n. 10 notes another, although senseless, mistake in pagination, namely, \( \text{ⲏⲓ} \) (\( 57 \)) for \( \text{ⲏⲓ} \) (\( 56 \)).

\(^13\) Robinson, “The Manuscript’s History” (n. 3) xxxvii. In that case, however, tractate 5 will have ended on p. 132 rather than on p. 134, as based on Robinson’s postulated single flyleaf. Mississippi Coptic Codex II, like Crosby-Schøyen 193, is said to belong to the Dishna papers.
single, uninscribed flyleaf is correct, it will have ended on p. 134. On the other hand, if one postulates two flyleaves at the back, it will have ended on p. 132.

“Filler” or Conclusion?

Since the same scribe copied the entire codex, tractate 5 is clearly original to the codex. Less certain, however, is its function (or lack thereof) vis-à-vis the four documents that precede it. Of interest here is its difference in format. Whereas the first four texts are inscribed two columns to a page and, as well, are supplied with titles (superscript and subscript in at least three cases), tractate 5 is written in a single column, slightly broader than the two columns combined elsewhere and has no superscript title. Whatever subscript title it may have had is now lost.

The meaning of the contrast in format and title is open to more than one interpretation. Willis notes the discrepancy but, in spite of it, writes, “The entire codex … was Paschal in character, and was perhaps a lector’s book for use at a pre-Nicene Easter celebration.”14 Similarly, for Allen Cabaniss tractate 5 belongs with the whole collection of texts, together labeled a Paschal lectionary.15 James Goehring, on the other hand, thinks that it may have been added by the scribe as a “filler” for the pages at the end of the codex that would otherwise have been left blank.16 The implication of Goehring’s suggestion is, therefore, that tractate 5 was selected for its length, rather than for its contents and relevance to the other texts. Yet, he is not unaware of a certain literary resemblance between this “filler” and Melito’s On the Passover.17

But perhaps the difference in format and the lack of superscript title admit of an explanation other than a spatial one. Since tractates 1-4 are clearly texts that enjoyed widespread popularity and thus came endowed with prestige and a certain level of authority, it need not occasion surprise that they were duly identified as to their origin and status. All of them are, moreover, translations from Greek. Whether their double-column format was inherited from their antegraphs is not possible to determine. The contrast with the fifth tractate on both counts, although noteworthy, might reflect a difference in status and origin. In other words, the concluding piece might be a local production rather than an acquired traditional text. What “local” might mean will be suggested

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14 Willis (n. 2) 386.
16 Goehring (n. 2) lii and 263.
17 Goehring (n. 2) 263, n. 2.
later. As we will suggest presently, rather than having been composed in Greek, tractate 5 was well nigh certainly composed in Sahidic.

Finally, a consideration that has thus far been overlooked. Although tractate 5 is different in format from the other documents in the Crosby-Schøyen codex, it has the same single-column format as virtually all the other codices assigned to the so-called Dishna papers – and that includes P.Bodmer II, said to be in several respects parallel to our codex as a whole. The only codex among the published Dishna papers that features two columns of text per page is P.Bodmer XIX, a parchment containing Matthew and Romans in Sahidic. Thus within this larger grouping of texts tractate 5, rather than being an aberration, in fact reflects the norm. On that basis, one may want to rephrase the question and ask why it is that the first four tractates in our codex, Melito’s On the Passover, Jewish Martyrs, Epistle of Peter, and Jonah the Prophet, along with P. Bodmer XIX, deviate from the norm of the Dishna papers.

**Tractate 5 and the Rest of the Codex**

A better guide to the function of tractate 5 might be its form and contents, as well as its relationship to the rest of the codex. Both Willis and Goehring refer to it as a homily, and to the extent that contemporary English usage fails to distinguish between “homily” and “sermon,” this label may be adequate. Yet, even though tractate 5 contains allusions to the New Testament and cites Old Testament paradigms to be imitated, it can scarcely be called a text-based form of preaching. Moreover, it features a vocative in its opening sentence and then proceeds with a string of hortatory forms. In fact, with the new evidence of P.Chester Beatty 2026, it is now clearer than ever that, for at least its first four pages, the theme of tractate 5 is a summons to prayer for God’s mercy, the persistence of which is reminiscent of the importunate widow (Lk 18:1-8). Thus Goehring’s second choice would seem preferable to his first. That is to say, what we have is not a homily but an exhortation or, perhaps better, a supplication for

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18 Goehring (n. 2) li. For a suggested list of the Dishna papers see Robinson, “The Manuscript’s History” (n. 3) xxviii-xxxiii.

19 The Bibliothèque Bodmer has confirmed that the unpublished Bodmer papyri thought to belong to the Dishna papers (P.Bodmer XL-XLIV) follow suit in having a single column of text per page.

20 Willis (n. 2) 386.

21 Goehring (n. 2) 264.

mercy. Not only do its form and content favor this label, but a summons to
prevail on God’s mercy, as a conclusion to a series of documents that focus on
suffering, death, and resurrection, typologically of Christ in the first instance
but, in terms of imitatio Christi, also of Christians, makes eminent sense. Not
to be overlooked in this connection is the refrain that comes with each biblical
example: “X entreated God until he had mercy on him.” Plausibly, this refrain
is an audience response to the lector’s reciting of the concluding supplication.

Language and the Question of Authorship

If tractate 5 is not only original to the codex but appears as well to play a
literary and liturgical role within it, one may well wonder who composed it.
As already noted, no title or name was attached or, in any case, has survived.
Among the writers represented in the codex, Melito would seem to be the
only potential candidate, and Goehring has indeed drawn our attention to
some stylistic similarities between Melito’s homily and tractate 5. By way of
illustration he cites a specific rhetorical device (anaphora):

It is difficult if not impossible, as Goehring implies, to retrovert these lines
into Greek without losing the anaphora, that is, the repetition of clause-initial
prefixed verb forms. But if that is the case, it would seem logical to conclude
that tractate 5 is not likely a translation from Greek – unless one be prepared
to posit a translator committed to replacing rhetorical techniques in the Greek
with comparable techniques in Coptic.

But if it is unlikely that tractate 5 was composed in Greek, it is unlikely for
the same reason that Melito composed it, whatever further rhetorical similari-
ties may be found to exist. Goehring reinforces this conclusion when he writes,

The splendid rhetorical style and phrasing of the Greek text [of
Melito] is often lacking in the version either because it was not of

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23 Goehring (n. 2) 264.
24 Goehring (n. 2) 263, n. 2.
25 Goehring (n. 2) 264.
major interest to the scribe or because it lay beyond his competence to translate it.26

Now that we have two additional pages of tractate 5, its rhetorical style stands in even greater contrast to Melito-in-Coptic than it did before. Therefore, although the author of tractate 5 may possibly have imitated Melito's style, Melito can scarcely be the author of the concluding exhortation. Moreover, since tractate 5 is only extant in Sahidic, the most parsimonious explanation of its linguistic form is clearly that it was composed in the only language in which it is extant. The burden of proof must surely lie with those who would have it otherwise.

*Tractate 5 and Melito*

But if Melito did not write tractate 5, similarities of whatever kind, although irrelevant for the question of authorship, might nevertheless be relevant for the question of the function of tractate 5 within the codex. So, for instance, the ovine metaphor of 125.7-8 is not only an allusion to Jn 10:11-18 but is also one heavily used by Melito.

Moreover, it is of interest that, although tractate 5 has a couple of allusions to the New Testament (see 125.7 and 126.2), all the extant paradigms of perseverance in entreaty are taken from the Old Testament – a predilection for the Old Testament similar to Melito’s. Also, in two cases, that of Joseph and of Moses, the same event in their lives, as highlighted by Melito, is used as the occasion for imploration in tractate 5, even though its theme does not require it: Joseph is sold (Melito §59; tract. 5, 126.12-127.1), and Moses is exposed (Melito §59; tract. 5, 128.3-5). In the case of Joseph, our author apparently uses the same verb and grammar as does Melito’s translator; in the case of Moses he presupposes readers’/hearers’ indulgence, since Moses was but a babe of three months when exposed (Ex 2:2). To be noted too is that, while both Joseph and Moses are common paradigms in the Pachomiana and Joseph’s wisdom is explicitly cited, the two events in their respective lives that occasion their entreaty for mercy do not appear in the Pachomiana but are explicitly mentioned in Melito. Nevertheless, what suggests catering to Melito is the fact that Joseph’s epithet (“wise”) in tractate 5 is scarcely warranted by the event cited, namely, his being sold to Egypt. At this point, his reputation for wisdom had not as yet been established.

Of interest as well is that Egypt and Pharaoh figure prominently in tractate 5, as they do in Melito, although admittedly both are central to the first Pascha

26 See Goehring and Willis’s introduction to Melito in (n. 2) 5.
event. Whereas God makes Joseph lord over the entire land, he (apparently) makes Moses lord over Pharaoh. Thus Moses is appropriately one step up on Joseph.

Although the specifics of the Joseph and Moses paradigms cater to Melito’s *On the Passover*, there are differences as well. Whereas Melito focuses on Jesus’ suffering/death and resurrection, a theme reinforced by the three tractates to follow, our author adopts a seemingly broader perspective by focusing on his incarnation and his public ministry, the first of which is mentioned only as a backdrop by Melito, while the second one is not broached at all. Another difference is that, whereas for Melito Old Testament personages are types of Christ, a view underscored by early Christian reading of Jonah, for our author the saints of the Old Covenant are subjects for *imitatio* by Christians, a perspective in line with a Christian reading of 2 Macc 5:27-7:41. Neither of these differences, however, is incompatible with Melito.

*Tractate 5: Text and Translation*

124(→)

It is profitable for our soul, my brothers, to seek after God.

1 Preceded by tractate 4, *Jonah the Prophet*

125(↓)

Let us raise our souls upwards to God. Perhaps he will hear us. Perhaps he will have mercy on us. If we hear and do not ponder, we will incur judgment. If we hear and act, verily we will be among his saints. The good shepherd it is, who came down to his sheep. He will teach them the word that leads to life. Let the continent keep their garments shining daily, and let them watch and to life. Let the continent keep their garments shining daily, and let them watch and

4 <NT>\text{nntmeye} also possible is \text{ntnyme} \text{e} 5 \text{mon} the following γ is ill formed and should be deleted 7 \text{pious etnanoyp} cf. Jn 10:11
For the grammar and wording see Melito §59, p. 22. 2-3 Λυτωμή = Λυτωμή 6 that they come to be with the bridegroom. Righteous Noah, as he was seeking after the Lord, spread out his hands; he entreated God until he had mercy on him; he did not perish with the whole world. Wise Joseph, 10 Αὐτωμή = Λυτωμή 5 see to it that they come to be among his saints. Let the virgins keep their lamps filled daily, and let them watch and see to it that they come to be with the bridegroom. Righteous Noah, as he was seeking after the Lord, spread out his hands; he entreated God until he had mercy on him; he did not perish with the whole world. Wise Joseph,
on him; he entreated God
until he had mercy on him; he heard
him and saved him. Moses
the babe, who was put
upon the water, spread out
his hands; he entreated
God until he had mercy on him;
he entreated God until he had
mercy on him; he made him lord over
Pharaoh. We three
Pharaoh. We three

Our Text and a Monastic Milieu

Since Melito was not responsible for tractate 5, even though a certain continuity with his translation into Sahidic is in evidence, the question of authorship remains. Since no name was attached, the best we can do is to look for clues within the text itself. We again begin with Goehring.

As noted before, although Goehring thinks that tractate 5 is an early Christian homily, he does not preclude the possibility that it is an exhortation or catechesis “delivered in a monastic setting.”27 In comment on 125.10-126.6, on the other hand – with reference to the “continent” (ἐνκρατής) and the “virgins” (παρθένοι) – he weights his options differently, when he writes that, while this passage does not limit the text to a monastic setting, it “would at least make it readily at home there.”28 But if tractate 5 can be seen to be at home in a monastic setting, might one not surmise that it in fact originated there?

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27 Goehring (n. 2) 264.
28 Goehring (n. 2) 264.
That our text, in its brief introduction, makes the reference to abstinence must surely reflect its importance to our composer. Furthermore, it is not abstinence in general that is at issue but sexual abstinence for males and females. Although this does not need to mean that both sexes were part of the text’s actual audience, it does mean that both belonged to its prospective audience. It is difficult at this point not to be reminded of what we are told about Pachomius, the founder of the monastic koinonia in the Thebaid, namely, that when he prayed, he prayed in the first place for monks and virgins.\textsuperscript{29} Also of interest is the exhortation that those who fear the Lord should arm themselves with chastity, so that “they may deserve to hear.”\textsuperscript{30} Chastity and deserving to hear are, therefore, interdependent.


\textsuperscript{30} Testament of Horsiesios §20, in Armand Veilleux, Pachomian Koinonia. 3 (Kalamazoo, MI 1982) 185.
Underscoring the emphasis on sexual abstinence in our text is an exhortation very much at home in a monastic setting, namely, the call for continual watchfulness (125.12; 126.6) lest one perish like the generation of the Flood, except for righteous Noah (126.11-12).

A Pachomian Lectionary?

As has been intimated, for a variety of reasons that remain to be amplified, our hypothesis is that tractate 5 was composed at a Pachomian monastery where the entire codex was intended to be the liturgy for the annual Easter celebration of the Pachomian koinonia of monasteries. Several items have already been noted as being consistent with such a setting. We can add to the list 125.8-9 where, after emphasizing that it was the “good shepherd” who came down to his sheep, the text focuses on his teaching ministry, not as an historical event in the relatively distant past but as a present and future mission, carried on, no doubt, by the Pachomian brotherhood. In other words, the use of the future tense (ⲉⲥⲧⲁⲧⲥⲃⲟⲟⲩ) appears to be quite deliberate. The statement as a whole makes eminent sense, given that “teaching held first place in Pachomius’ quasi-apostolic mission.”

If the Crosby-Schøyen codex is an Easter lectionary, as is widely held, and if tractate 5 not only forms its liturgical conclusion but also reflects a Pachomian origin, as we are suggesting, the most parsimonious explanation would once again seem to be that the entire manuscript was created for the celebration of a Pachomian Pascha or Easter. That the Pachomian federation of monasteries celebrated a communal Easter festival on an annual basis is a well-known fact, often mentioned in the Pachomiana, including, for example, in the fifth letter of Pachomius and the first letter of Theodore, both sent out for the occasion. The monks assembled at Pbow, the headquarters of the koinonia, and celebrated Easter for six days, ending on Saturday evening, resurrection Sunday being celebrated as the Day of Joy. The festival, as it seems, was a time par excellence of fasting, vigils, biblical instruction, prayer, recitation, remission, and physical labor. The baptism of catechumens also took place on this occasion.

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31 See, for example, G1 54; Theodore, Instr. 3.30; Horsiesius, Test. 17.
32 Adalbert de Vogüé in “Foreword” to Veilleux (n. 28) xiv.
33 See Veilleux (n. 30) 63-67 and 123-125 respectively, and Pachomius, Instruction 2, ibidem 47-48. While the titles are no doubt secondary, the Passover festival is noted in the letters per se.
Structure and Theme of Tractate 5

Both the structure and the theme of our tractate underscore its Pachomian origin. The highly structured text we have divides readily into two parts: first, an introduction to the tractate (124.1-126.6) and, second, a list of Old Testament paradigms to be imitated (126.6-128.10). While each part has its own internal arrangement, they are interconnected by a partial repetition of ωινε νκα ΠΝΟΥΤΕ of 124.2 in ωινε ΝΚΑ ΠΧΟΕΙΣ of 126.7.

In part one nothing stands out as much as lexical and grammatical repetition, with the sentences arranged essentially in pairs, as becomes readily apparent from the following delineation:

Profitable it is for our soul (ψυχη), my brothers, to seek after God (ΠΝΟΥΤΕ).
Let us raise our souls (ψυχη) upwards to God (ΠΝΟΥΤΕ).
Perhaps (αρη ρω) he will hear us.
Perhaps (αρη ρω) he will have mercy on us.
If we hear (ενκωτίμ) and do not ponder, we will incur judgment.
If we hear (ενκωτίμ) and act, verily we will be among his saints (τοις ΝΕΦΗΝΑΙΑΙ).
The good shepherd it is, who came down to his sheep.
He will teach them the word that leads to life.
Let (μαρην-) the continent keep (κα) their garments shining daily (ΜΜΗΝΕ), and let them watch (ΝΕΦΟΕΙΣ) and see (ΝΕΦΑΡΗΣ) to it that they come to be among his saints (τοις ΝΕΦΗΝΑΙΑΙ).
Let (μαρην-) the virgins keep (κα) their lamps filled daily (ΜΜΗΝΕ) and let them watch (ΝΕΦΟΕΙΣ) and see (ΝΕΦΑΡΗΣ) to it that they come to be with the bridegroom.

Repetition continues in part two, but since all paradigms have the same structure, each functions as a distinct unit of text:

Righteous Noah, as he was seeking after the Lord, spread out his hands; he entreated God until he had mercy on him;
(refrain:) he entreated God until he had mercy on him;

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34 Lists of Old Testament models to follow are very common in the Pachomiana. Especially relevant is Instructions of Saint Pachomius §25 in Veilleux (n. 30) 24, which features a series of four saints, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and Daniel plus Daniel's three friends as a unit. In the first three instances the listener is exhorted to "seek after" (ωινε νκα) God like X, while in the last two cases, the saints in question are reported to "have sought after" God.
he did not perish with the whole world.
Wise Joseph, who was sold into Egypt, spread out his hands;
he entreated God until he had mercy on him;
(refrain:) he entreated God until he had mercy on him;
he made him lord over the whole land.
Daniel the prophet, who was thrown to the lions, spread out his hands;
he entreated God until he had mercy on him;
(refrain:) he entreated God until he had mercy on him;
he heard him and saved him.
Moses the babe, who was put upon the water, spread out his hands;
he entreated God until he had mercy on him;
(refrain:) he entreated God until he had mercy on him;
he made him lord over Pharaoh.

Various rhetorical techniques are in evidence, for example, anaphora, anadiplosis, asyndeton, antithesis, and parallelism.

The theme of tractate 5 is clear from the outset and is dramatically underscored by the refrain in the list of paradigms. The refrain may possibly have been recited in unison. While its wording may well have been influenced by the Psalms where a call for God’s mercy (יַעֲנָה) is found close to twenty times, the plea itself was deeply rooted in Pachomian thought. As Veilleux observes, “Consciousness of the importance of God’s mercy and grace permeates all the pachomian literature.”

Lastly, not to be overlooked is that, in all four paradigms, the Old Testament saint in question utters his plea for divine mercy in a state of mortal danger. For that reason, as it seems, the verb used is not the common Sahidic term for prayer (σαλέ) but a much rarer synonym that appears to carry a greater sense of urgency, namely, δύψα. All in all, it may thus be inferred that, like the paradigmatic saints, the addressees of tractate 5 are perceived to be radically beholden to God’s mercy.

Pachomius’ Putative Prayer Pose

Notably in the Lives of Pachomius some interesting information is presented on his reputed prayer pose. Whether this information has a direct bearing on what is stated in tractate 5, is not clear. We include it here as potential evidence of relationship between tractate 5 and the Pachomiana.

35 Veilleux (n. 30) 81.
Central to the issue are essentially three passages suggesting that spreading out one’s hands in prayer had a special meaning for Pachomius.

He [Pachomius] . . . had the habit when he extended his hands in prayer (ἐκτείνας εἰς εὐχὴν τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ), of not right away drawing them a little to himself for rest. Rather, by extending them as if on a cross (ὡς ἐπὶ σταυροῦ) he would wear down the body to stay awake for prayers.36

Both here and in §5 the Greek author (translator?) uses the verb ἐκτείνω “stretch out,” whereas Coptic tradition throughout has ⲡⲟⲣⲁ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ “spread out” for the prayer pose. The Greek writer, therefore, opts for Greek idiom rather than trying to reflect Coptic wording.37 A two-fold significance is ascribed to the pose, the first being its cruciform manner and the second its function to promote wakefulness.

They [Pachomius and his brother John] mortified themselves during their prayers, moving neither their feet nor their hands, which they kept stretched out (ⲡⲱⲣⲁ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ) lest sleep overtake them.38

The practical aim for the pose is here the same as in G1 §16 but no theological symbolism is adduced.

It is through our contact with such a righteous man [Pachomius] that we have learned the will of God even in such details as the manner of

36 Veilleux (n. 29) 308, §16, = François Halkin, Sancti Pachomii Vitae Graecae (= G1) (Brussels 1932) 10, §16. MS B has a lengthy lacuna at this point, from the first two lines of §11 to the middle of §17 (see François Halkin, Le corpus Athénien de Saint Pachome [Genève 1982]).

37 What happened here is similar to what happened in the Septuagint with the expression in question. Nearly always when the Hebrew parent text read שידם שחר “spread out the hands (in prayer),” the Greek rendered it by δια/ἐκπετάννυμι τὰς χεῖρας “spread out the hands (in prayer),” but in the books composed in Greek (plus Isa 1:15) the phrase is consistently ἀνα/ἐκ/προτείνω τὰς χεῖρας, “stretch up/out/forward the hands (in prayer).” Also of interest is Epistula Ammonis §19 (= EpAm), which may have an allusion to 2 Macc 15:21. In any case three brothers are said to raise their hands to heaven (ἀνατείναντες τὰς χεῖρας εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν) and tearfully entreat God to have mercy. Thus, there is here no doubt about the prayer pose. See James E. Goehring, The Letter of Ammon and Pachomian Monasticism (Berlin-New York 1986) 140 and 170.

stretching our hands upward to the Lord (φορῶ εἴσελθε εἰς τὸν θυσίαν) and how one should pray to God. It is he who taught it to us.  

While this reference features neither explanation we find in the preceding passages, it suggests not only that the prayer pose was in some way unique to Pachomius but also that he taught it to his followers. If correct, this would explain why in the Pachomiana it is attributed not only to Pachomius but to some of his followers as well. One finds the phrase in question some twenty times, although some of these are duplicates.

That the expression πορεύ εἴσελθε εἰς τὸν θυσία as a prayer pose originated with Pachomius is out of the question for the simple reason that we not only find its Greek equivalent (δια/ἐκπετάννυμι κτλ.) already in the Septuagint (as a literal rendering of Hebrew פרש) but also in its Coptic daughter versions. Prominent instances are Ex 9:29 and 33, where Moses (“outside the city”) spreads out his hands in prayer to the Lord to relieve Egypt from the seventh plague. The Sahidic here uses πορεύ εἰς τὸν θυσία, in distinction from ςοοθεν εἰς τὸν θυσία employed for other instances of raising one’s hand in Ex 3-15. It is not without interest that, as Goehring notes, Pachomius was identified with Moses, at least by his successors.

That Pachomius put his own interpretation on the prayer pose is not improbable and is, in any case, suggested by the relative frequency with which the phrase appears in his Lives.

It also figures prominently in tractate 5 by occurring in all four paradigms from the Old Testament. Whether this is attributable to Pachomian authorship or is due to the central role played by the Exodus account in the codex is difficult to say. Either scenario can adequately explain the phenomenon.

Conclusion

As we noted in the introduction to this article, James Robinson has argued that the Crosby-Schøyen codex belongs to the so-called Dishna papers, discovered in 1952 in Upper Egypt near the ancient headquarters of the Pachomian monastic movement, at Pbow, and that the manuscripts of this find

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once belonged to the monastery’s library. The internal evidence of tractate 5 and the role that it plays within the codex, we believe, confirm a Pachomian origin for the entire collection of Paschal texts. If that is correct, the date of Crosby-Schøyen MS 193 cannot be earlier than the beginnings of the Pachomian federation of monasteries ca. AD 329. Given that all palaeographically assigned dates fall in the second to fourth centuries (with ca. 400 as the latest), it appears plausible that the codex was written some time between ca. 329 and Pachomius’ death in 346, even though a somewhat later date poses no historical problems. In light of Pachomius’ larger-than-life stature in the koinonia (at least, viewed retrospectively by his successors), it is not improbable that it was he who composed tractate 5, whether as a freestanding text or as part of the Paschal lectionary. But again, from a historical perspective there is no good reason to exclude the possibility that one of his successors, Theodore or Horsiesius, composed or commissioned our text.42

Just how this lectionary ended we do not know, but it is clear that tractate 5 could have been at most ca. ten pages long (although most likely no more than eight). Since the introduction and a list of paradigms to be imitated are extant, it seems safe to postulate that, at the very least, a brief entreaty for God’s mercy would have followed.

One can only hope that newly discovered fragments will once again lift the veil of history – even if ever so slightly.

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42 In a private communication (dated 4/20/2011) James Goehring writes: “I would push the codex’s date later in his [Pachomius’] life or in the period after his death when the federation had grown in size and stature. It would certainly fit the period from the mid-fourth to fifth centuries when the community at Pbow constructed three basilicas in succession, each larger and more ornate than the last.”
Crosby-Schøyen 193? unidentified (↓) = CB 13(22)

Crosby-Schøyen 193? unidentified (→) = CB 13(22)
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