THE PSALIS
FOR THE CONSECRATION OF THE CHURCH
(REVISITED)

The manuscript

The description of the manuscript according to the Catalogue of Mingana is as follows:

239×164 mm. 259 leaves. Nineteen lines to the page. The ritual of the Consecration of a new church and a new altar, according to the ritual of the Coptic Church. The MS is divided into two columns, the first of which is in Coptic and the second in Arabic, as is usual in the MSS. Written after the Arab invasion.

A. Ff. 4a–201: The ritual of the Consecration of a church
B. Ff. 204–255b The ritual of the Consecration of the Altar
Ff. 256a–257b contain a long colophon in which we are informed that the MS was written by the priest-monk in the monastery of St. George of Tūrā on Thursday, the 5th of the month of Hatūr, in the year 1024 of the Martyrs (AD 1308) in the time of John (spelt Yowannes), the Coptic patriarch of Alexandria.\(^1\)

On fol. 203a is an inscription in Arabic by the Coptic Patriarch Cyril,\(^2\) presenting the Ms. to John, bishop of Salisbury, on the 4th of the month of Bābah, of the year 1615 of the Martyrs (A.D. 1899). Below the inscription is the seal of the Patriarch, dated 1613, probably of the Martyrs (A.D. 1897). On the opposite page (fol. 202b) a similar statement is found in English.

On fol. 8a is a not very clear note in which it is stated that the Ms came to the possession of a spiritual son of the above-mentioned Patriarch John (spelt Yowannes), who was also called John (spelt Yūhanna).

On fol. 255b s an inscription by the son of the last John, who was called Farj-Allah, who gave the Ms. was wakf to a man whose name has been partly obliterated and cannot be deciphered with safety.

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(1) See below.

Fol. 3b is occupied with a representation of the Cross in black, yellow and red, and on the margins of many leaves is a representation of a bird holding a flower or a fruit in its beak. Many geometrical patterns are also found before the main divisions of the work. The pattern on fol. 203b fills the whole page.

The Coptic part of the Ms is written in a bold and clear hand, and the Arabic part in a handsome Egyptian Naskhi. Headings in red. The first Coptic words of a new section are in thick black characters.

The rubrics, unlike those found in MS. 24 [9] (which is only in Arabic) are in both Coptic and Arabic. [Mingana Chr. Arab. 61.] [Coptic-Arabic 2.]^3

We give here in full the colophon

We give here in full the colophon

Fol. 254r

Τῆς ἡμᾶς ἡμέρας
πολλαπλασιάζει τοὺς ἐνεργούς
ηὐσυνήθεις ἡμέρας
καὶ τοὺς ἄνθρωπους ἔκτενοι
Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ ἅγιος Πετρόφονος
ηὐσυνήθεις ἡμέρας
καὶ τοὺς ἄνθρωπους ἔκτενοι
ὁ ἴδιος ἡμέρας
καὶ τοὺς ἄνθρωπους ἔκτενοι

An

السهم المتوقفة
ممرى القلب
الروافع الحرون
العنف في الطرادكة
الذكاء بفطيرك
الآسديرة الله السماة
الانبهى على كرسى
سنين قتيرة
وازنة ويوكون
شعبة في سلامة
واطمانة ويوكون
ثوابتي في المانيا
الإرثكة وكسبهم
المسيح ابراره
وصافية التین
فازوا ملوكه امین
اذكرىوا الخبير

البطل النحيف
السقى الماطف
غير المستحق ان يدعا
ماسان ان يسبى اسم
الإلهة بدير القديس
مار حرسه بطرأ وهو
يساى كلمى قرى فيه
محبة الله ان يدعوا
للمسين من اجليل يستغفر
له خطاياه الكبيرة
وعلائه وتعليبه
رحمة في يوم
المجازة وكنم
قال شيا
يجازه المسيح عوضه
اضعاف كثيرة
سلام من الله
في سدر طرا في
يوم الخمساء الخامس
من شهر هنور
In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Holy Trinity consubstantial. This is our God, we the Christians.

This good remembrance holy is this holy book of the consecration by the virtuous father, the shepherd entrusted whom Christ established him upon His pure sheep, who bought through His precious blood, in order to pasture them in the fertile garden and feed their souls with his honest teachings and to make to stand their fallen souls. The teacher, the guide, the straight (fol. 253v) on his paths, the firm stronghold who tread down the afflicted, the quencher of the burning arrows, the comforter of the hearts, the compassionate merciful, the great patriarch Abba John the 80th, the patriarch of Alexandria. May God confirm him on his throne for many years and times, while his people is ion peace and solemn, in order that they became firm in the orthodox faith of Christ, so that He (Christ) counts them with the righteous and just who won the beautiful kingdom Amen. Also remember, the humble (fol. 254r) poor, miserable, the sinner, who is not worthy to be called man moreover monk in the monastery of Tura. He (the scribe) demands, with the charity of God, to everybody who will read it, to pray for him to Christ in order that He forgives

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(4) Coptic read differently “This holy book of the consecration is the good remembrance...”
(5) Coptic “most holy.”
(6) Coptic “in a fatty place.”
his many sins, and his mistakes and to grant him mercy on the day of reward. And everyone who will say something, Christ reward him nay times. It was finished with the peace of God in the monastery of Tura on the 5th day of the month of Hatur (254v). In the year 1024 of the Martyrs, (=1307 AD) in the seventh year of the closing down of the churches and the Christians were force to wear the blue turbans. We pray Christ our God to have pity upon his people and to open the gates of the churches and make to return as they were for He is a pitiful and merciful God. Glory be to Him with His Good Father and Holy Spirit forever Amen.

The importance of this manuscript is that it was copied while the churches were closed for seven years however the patriarch John Ibn Qiddis hopped that the churches will be opened and even more churches will be built which necessitated the copying of the book of consecration of the “new” churches.

The psalis

The psalis are hymns special hymn recited on different occasions. Ibn Kabar († 1324AD) in his encyclopaedia “Lamp of Darkness” mentions that there are new psalis which are not known to everybody and he gave a list of daily psalis. It is important to mention that the all the psalis mentioned by Ibn Kabar were anonymous. The psalis attributed to an author (such as Sarkis, Nicodemus, Hermina, Christolodus) appeared later.


As our psalis are anonymous and short (only 13 stanzas for the psali Adam and 8 satanzas for the psali Watos) we may assume that we composed early.

The incipit of these psalis are mentioned by Ibn Kabar\(^\text{12}\) without giving the complete text. Horner gives the Coptic and the Arabic text.\(^\text{13}\) We consider that an edition of the entire text Coptic Arabic is needed especially that after the first edition many studies had been done.

**Text I**

Psali for the Virgin Adam\(^\text{14}\)

\[\text{Adam was yet sorrowful of heart.} \]

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\(^{13}\) G. Horner, *The Service for the Consecration of a Church and Altar according to the Cooptic Rite*, edited with translation from a Coptic and Arabic Manuscript of A.D. 1307 (London, 1902) 391–396 (text), 12–13 (translation) and for a summary of the rite cf. O. H. E. Burmester, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church, A detailed description of her liturgical services and the rites and ceremonies observed in the administration of her sacraments* (Textes et Documents) (Le Caire: Société d’Archéologie Copte, 1967) 236–250.

\(^{14}\) The tone to which hymns are sung on Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays. The name is taken from the first word of the first stanza of the Theotokia of Monday: “Adam was yet sorrowful of heart.” Cf. *Catalogue of the Coptic and Christian Arabic Mss preserved in the library of the Church of the All-Holy Virgin Mary known as Qasria Ar-Rihan at Old Cairo* (Cairo: Société d’Archéologie Copte, 1973) xii.

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eτε θα με τε Μεμερία τού ἱερό
eτα ποιε πεννηνοῦτ’ ταξρος
gίχεν ἤπετα

αγας σεν τεχνή’ ἵνα μην
εγεννηνοῦτ’ ιεσοῦ’ τοια διά
γερή ὑμνημος ’ἐρος*
eτε ἀξιάσιος
πιποστολικος σεν κυριάλος
 phiς ενομον ετήχορ

πιχροστόνοις σεν κασιων
πιπύρος ετήχορ ιε
τε µπροσόνα

σεν διόεφορος πιονολήγτης
φιετάρος εσπριν ηπτονος

πλεον

ζτονε ’ἐραμο ’πρεκ αρδα
θεολογιος πιποτ’ ταχιερευς
ιτε ρακιο ’τακι

φιεταρφερ ’ευραξεν περονος ιναρκος εὐφτ εινα
’ηπεαειν ιηνεονεινε* σεν οικο-

φιεταρθαξρο ’πιλατζ’ ιτε
πιτην εταγεωντ’ σεν ἁνεκα

κατ’ ἐσινω ω ναναι ’ἐσινω
δραπα ’ισνετε σασι σεν ἁε-


(16) Read so.
Translation I

Renew for me, o islands, renew, according to the voice of the great prophet Isaiah.17

Hear to Solomon the ecclesiastes18 speaking about the honour of the Virgin:

Calling her in the book Song of Songs: “My sister, my friend (she who is) perfect.”

Which is the Church, the new Jerusalem, which Christ our God has established on the rock.19

He put in its midst, honoured stones, chosen chief corner stone shining in it.*

Who are Athanasius the Apostolic and Cyril the mighty young of lion.

Chrysostom and Basil the mighty towers of the Orthodoxy.
And Dioscorus the confessor who contradicted the tone of Leo,
Abba Theodosius the great Archpriest of the city Alexandria joined them.

Who flourished on the throne of Mark rightly handling the word of Truth.

He resembled to the holy Paul, the tongue of perfume, the crown of the Church.

He (Theodosius) established the faith of the 318 who assembled in Nicaea

Go round in Sion, o my shepherds, rejoice in it and talk in their towers.

For Christ, our God is its midst, (Church) as a surrounding wall so it will never be shaken20 forever.

We also, we pray...

Commentary I

Stanza 1

It seems that the scribe in Coptic repeat the second verb while it should be “Listen to them” the Arabic followed the Coptic.

The Arabic version of the second stanza render πισκαναϊαθες as الكنيسة “ecclesiastic”

The third stanza resembles to the yearly doxology of the Virgin:

(17) Is. 41:1.
(19) Mt. 16:18.
(20) Lit. “It will never move.”
"Σολομών ἡ γυνὴ ὑπὲρος τῶν πιστῶν ἐν τῇ ἡράκλεια ἡγούμενη χηροὶ ταφερότατος ἡ γυνὴ ἡ γυνὴ"

"Solomon has called her, in the Song of Songs: “My sister and my friend, my true city Jerusalem”21

This stanza is inspired by the Song of Songs 4:7.

**Stanza 3**

In the Arabic rendered یَلَّهُادَة “The new Jerusalem” by “الجديدة the renewed Jerusalem”

**Stanza 4**

While the Coptic has πιστῶς ἡλέκτρι “corner Stone” the Arabic rendered by ‘馋ئا al-‘inā the beginning of the building” (i.e. the foundation).

The title of Apostolic for Athanasius is very well attested in Coptic Liturgical books such as in the absolution of the ministers22 or the memento sanctorum23 as well as in the memento sanctorum of the Psalmodia24

The title of Cyril occurs in the Ms 23 in fol. Fol. ṣ考评 r (the actual fol. 3)

λῆνος ψαρός ψωφον θ πεπλεμοφοσ πησαχούγι ετχορ ψενιώτ άρβα κυριακος

Come to us today, O all-wise man, the mighty cub, our father Cyril,25

And also in the same Ms. Fol. ṣ考评

(21)  Nahdat ‘I-Kanais, πιστήν της ἡγαθοτική εφούχα της προπήν ἡφήν ἐσταύρωμα της πνεύματος τής εκκλησίας πρεσβυτρινής πορφολογος [The book of the holy Psalmodia of the year according to what the Fathers of the Coptic Orthodox Church had established] (Cairo, 1949) 326–327.


(23)  Euch. 1902, p. 354.

(24)  Nahdat ‘I-Kanais, πιστήν..., 77.

We find that the two saints mentioned are from Asia Minor and they are remembered especially that they composed two liturgies.

Stanza 6
The scribe wrote the verb so only o this verb is not attested with the preposition μετά. The Arabic rendered with نقض “contradict”

Stanza 7
The Arabic has وُرَافَقَهُم meaning “he agreed with them” while it should be rendered وُرَافَقَهُم “they accompanied him”

The Coptic has “Archpriest” while in Arabic it has “patriarch” as title for Theodosius.

Stanza 8
The second part of this stanza corresponds to the litany for the patriarch

συμμαθησείν βαος Χριστοῦ των θεον ουκ ωσό ωσι των θεον ουκ ωσοτεν. 27

Stanza 9
The Arabic translator did not understand εσχεσιος which is rare in Coptic liturgical text and translated as the “Instructor” the word λαυρα “crown” was rendered as “pride.”

Stanza 10
It is amazing to find that there are three stanzas (8–10) mainly about Theodosius.

Stanza 11
This stanza is inspired from

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psalm 48[47]: 12 [10]</th>
<th>Psali</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Κυριε εσχετε ουκ ονημετ</td>
<td>Κυριε εσχετε ουκ αναμε ανεξορ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stanza 12
The author shifts from Sion of the Old Testament to the Church the new Sion.

Stanza 13
The only few words are mentioned in the last stanza, which means that the author or the scribe assumed that it was known to everybody. The complete stanza is

And we also pray to win mercy, through your *intercession*, with the Lover of mankind.  

Text II
In Arabic
And if it was a Watos\(^{30}\) day, they say this psali

(29)  Nahdat *ʾl-Kanais, Ṣawwān...*, 102–103.

(30)  The tone to which hymns are sung on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. the name is taken from the first stanza of the Theotokia for Thursday: “The Bush which Moses saw in the desert.”
Transalation II

At the dedication of Sion, we, all the nations, rejoiced, who were called by the new name of Christ. For they will neither consider it as a tent\footnote{31} in the vineyard nor\footnote{31} as a deserted city. But it will be called the dwelling of the Most High and the tabernacle which is called the holy of Holies. And the Paradise of God wherein he preceded to plant the life-giver wood of the Cross. And one of the cities which Moses indicated that those who take refuge to them, would be revenged. No murders will rest in you (o Church) but honoured relics of the winner martyrs. Those whose leader in the holy stadium is saint Stephen the truly bearer of the crown. For our Lord Jesus Christ established it (the church)

Commentary II

Stanza 1

the Coptic used the noun και\footnote{32} as verb, with the verbal prefix και to form a noun. The Arabic rendered differently “When Sion was renewed, we, all the nation who were called with the new name of Jesus, rejoice.

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\footnote{31}{Or “a cottage”}

\footnote{32}{Crum, A Coptic Dictionary..., 3a.}
Stanza 2
The stanza started with an analogy inspired by Isaiah 1:8 and Proverbs 25:28. It is important to mention that the book of Proverbs in Bohairic did entirely not survive.33

The Arabic rendered the verb ꞌمصر with تقولواموارة “do not say with conspiracy”

We prefer to translate the Loan Greek word ꞌϚυν with tent while in Arabic it is rendered as الغبة “the dome”

Stanza 3
The first part of the stanza is inspired by many biblical texts among them Ps 91:9

The second part is a direct quotation from two stanzas of the Sunday’s Theotokia

You are truly called, O blessed, among the women, the second Tabernacle

Which is called the Holy of Holies, wherein are the tablets.34

Stanza 4
The stanza is inspired by Apocalypse 2:7.
The Arabic adds to the translation of the “Precious Cross”

Stanza 5
The text is inspired by Number 35:6,11, etc about the city of refuge.

The Arabic replace و “and” او by “Or”

Stanza 6
The author of this stanza assumes that the church will be built over the relics of the martyrs As in the Apocalypse 6:9. “And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony”

(34) Nahdat ’l-Kanaıs, پخوی..., 101.
Stanza 7
While in Coptic we have the bearer of Crown πρεσβίσκιον the Arabic version rendered with the victorious الغالب

Stanza 8
In this stanza, the Arabic differs from the Coptic. The Arabic should be translated “Jesus Christ our King established it”

Conclusion

Despite that the book of the consecration of the Church was published many years ago, several points should be observed:

1. The date of the Manuscript: The manuscript was copied while the Churches were closed for seven years. This could reflect the hope that the patriarch John Ibn Qiddis had. Not only by ordering the copying of the Manuscript of the consecration of the Churches but also the patriarch consecrates the Myron in the year 1305. It is known that the Myron is used for the sanctification of the Water of the Baptistery, theunction of the new baptized, the consecration of the new churches, the consecration of the altars, the consecration of the portable altars, the consecration of the liturgical vessels, the consecration of the icons and the unction of the kings. All these activities need a certain freedom which was unavailable in his time.

2. The psalis were composed in Coptic and later were translated in Arabic hence we find some differences

3. The author had a very good knowledge of the liturgical texts.

4. We can find a special veneration for Theodosius, in the psali Adam that surpass the other saints.

5. The author used free quotations from the Bible and especially from the psalms, Isaiah, and the book of revelation which are read during the ceremony of consecration the Church.

6. Most of the Loan Greek words used in these texts are known from other liturgical texts, which could be an indication that the Greek was not used as a spoken language in the time of the composition of the psalis.

(35) See above.
(37) Cf. Burmester, The Egyptian or Coptic Church..., see index.
7. The first psali from the praising of the Virgin while talking about the Church. The reasoning behind is easy to grasp: On the one hand, in the theotokia of Sunday, (as in the Marian homilies of Severus) the tabernacle symbolized the Virgin Mary, on the other hand The tabernacle is the pre-figuration of Church of the New Testament, hence the Virgin Mary is the symbol of the Church.

8. The key-word in psali is “renew”, it is known that under the Islamic law the building of a new church was forbidden

**SUMMARY**

Since Horner’s publication no further studies had been done. In this article we will study several aspects of these psalis such as theology, liturgy and history.

