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## Naqlun: The Literary Texts from Seasons 1993 and 1995

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## NAQLUN

### THE LITERARY TEXTS FROM SEASONS 1993 AND 1995

**Katarzyna Urbaniak-Walczak**

The Coptic texts uncovered during excavations at Naqlun in the fall of 1993 and 1995 are mainly literary in nature. A more detailed analysis of the texts reveals the presence of at least 12 parchment codices. Most of the preserved texts are fragments of cards and a rare whole card, all found in the old monastery complex on kom D, in two rooms designated as D.21 and D.22.<sup>1</sup>

The single parchment cards include two cards illuminated with full-page representations of the Cross (N.88/93, N.98/93). They come from two codices of different size. The former of the two cards was doubtless reused; on its back, that is, on the clean back of the page with the Cross, there is a text fragment, which could not be identified so far. The partly preserved text with too small a margin was written in a rather fluent hand, but one that is characteristic of documents. It might be part of a bigger literary text copied by some monk, not a scribe, for his personal use.

Of undoubted interest are two whole and one fragmentarily preserved parchment cards originating from two different and quite early (in this particular assemblage) codices, written in a fine, broad uncial. Two of them, one whole card and the fragmentary piece (N.75/93, N.83/93), belonged to a single codex dated to the 5th century on paleographical grounds.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For an exhaustive list of publications on the Naqlun excavations, see W. Godlewski, Naqlun 1989-1992, in: *Acts of the Fifth International Congress of Coptic Studies*, Roma 1993, vol. 2, 183ff. See also W. Godlewski, E. Parandowska, Naqlun 1993, in: *PAM V*, 1993 (1994), p. 55f. and W. Godlewski, Naqlun, Excavations 1995, *PAM VII*, 1995 (1996), pp. 82-88.

<sup>2</sup> W. Stegemann, *Koptische Paläographie*, Heidelberg 1936, Taf. 5.

They contains a Sahidic fragment of Proverbs 7:23-8:9 and 10:23-11:3. Five other tiny fragments might have come from the same codex, but they are too small for identification beyond all doubt (N.94/93).

The other whole card (N.84/93) comes from another codex and contains a Sahidic fragment of the Letter of St Paul to the Colossi 2:2-2:19.<sup>3</sup> Based on the paleography, it can be dated to a slightly later period, namely the 6th/7th century.<sup>4</sup>

The remaining texts in this assemblage are, as already mentioned, later and are dated to the 9th, 10th and 11th century.<sup>5</sup>

The Biblical texts include also a Sahidic fragment of the last card of a codex containing the Gospel of St John 21:20-25 (N.77/93) of the 9th/10th century. The title of the Gospel: **ΠΕΙΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΙΝ ΚΑΤΑ ΙΩΩΖΝΝΗC**, is placed inside a frame made of *obelos* marks at the end of the text. On the verso of the same card there is a colophon, but neither the date nor the scribe's name have survived.

One should also mention another recently published fragment of the New Testament: a parchment piece containing Mt. 3:10-11 and 3:14-15 of the Fayum Gospel of St Matthew,<sup>6</sup> which is dated to the 9th/10th century. This fragment, unlike other texts discussed here, was discovered in 1989 in room 6 on kom D.

Beside the Biblical texts which have been identified so far, a highly interesting set of liturgical texts was discovered at

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<sup>3</sup> Identified by Prof. E. Wipszycka already during the 1995 excavation campaign.

<sup>4</sup> W. Stegemann, *Koptische Paläographie*, Heidelberg 1936, Taf. 8.

<sup>5</sup> The paleographic dating for all the remaining texts, also that not mentioned specifically in footnotes, is given after W. Stegemann, *Koptische Paläographie*, Heidelberg 1936, Taf. 8.

<sup>6</sup> K. Urbaniak-Walczak, Naqlun, koptische Texte (Grabungskampagne 1989), in: *JJP* XXIII, 1993, 159f; id., Ein Pergamentbruchstück eines Matthäusevan-geliums, *Festschrift Prof. M. Krause*, BSAC XXXV, 11995, 149-154.

Naqlun in the same rooms 21 and 22 inside the monastic complex on kom D.

One of the single parchment cards (N. 10/95) is a palimpsest.<sup>7</sup> The later text is part of a bilingual, Greek-Coptic liturgical text which originates most probably in the 9th or the turn of the 10th century.<sup>8</sup> The Coptic text is written in the Bohairic dialect; only a few of the readings reveal exceptions in favor of the Sahidic dialect. The Naqlun text most probably represents a listing of liturgical books, a deacon's invocations and selected readings of a priest. The presence of the latter combined with the absence of litanies intoned by the deacon excludes the possibility of the text being in fact a *diakonika*. It quite probably served as a help for a monk or monks who no longer understood Greek. This could also explain the text's later date. Underneath this text, on the verso of the card, under a row of simple obeloi, the same hand added two verses of text: **†ΕΡΜΕΝΙΑ ΝΝΙΑΔΔΔ, (=ΝΝΙΑΔΔΔΔ) ΝΕΒΕΡΕΟC (= ΝΕΒΡΕΟC) ΕΘΗΕΝ ΝΙΓΡΑΦΗ ΕΘΟΥΑΒ ΝΕΜ ΝΙΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ.**

What role this title was to serve in our text I am unable to say at the moment.

Two other parchment cards written in a not very fluent hand are fragments of two other liturgical texts. The cards on which they were written are also palimpsests. They were reused for the liturgical text which is most probably a small piece that was worth the special attention or memory of a monk.

One of the two (N.12/95) is a palimpsest with a Coptic text in a Fayum dialect of the 11th century,<sup>9</sup> written on a much bigger

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<sup>7</sup> T. Derda, K. Urbaniak-Walczak, P. Naqlun inv. 10/95: Greek excerpts from a liturgy (*diakonika* ?) with their Coptic translation, *JJP* XXVI, 1996, pp. 7-21, Pl. I-II (in print).

<sup>8</sup> W. Stegemann, *Koptische Paläographie*, Heidelberg 1936, Tafs. 15, 17, 19, 21; H. Hyvernat, *Album de paléographie copte*, (rep.) Osnabrück 1972, Pl. XV.

<sup>9</sup> W. Stegemann, *Koptische Paläographie*, Heidelberg 1936, Taf. 23.

earlier card from a codex and containing a Greek text. The Coptic text contains a fragment of an antiphon or hymn commemorating different saints or, although this does not seem highly probable, commemorating St Makarios, bishop of Thou (died c. 450, 27 **ⲡⲗⲟⲡⲉ** ). The Greek text is too faint to be read at all.

The other card (N.85/93) is a selected fragment from the liturgical book of Hermenia. It belongs to the sufficiently well represented set of Coptic liturgical texts called Hermeneiai, which are in fact a selection of aptly chosen quotes from the psalms, with each paragraph beginning with one and the same leading word.<sup>10</sup> The word **ⲒⲈⲮⲠⲮⲤⲗⲒⲎⲎ** is repeated in our text. The Naqlun text should be dated to the 11th century in all probability.<sup>11</sup>

Two fragmentarily preserved colophons from the 10th century (N.79/93, N.80/93) belong to two different codices.

Another fragment of a card (N.89/93) with particular verses numbered and separated from each other by a horizontal line, come most probably from the 10th century. It appears that they were part of a codex, although the pagination on either side, in the corner of the top margin, has not survived. I have been unable to identify this text satisfactorily.

Similarly I have not been able to identify another largely preserved text, written down in two columns and most probably consisting of: (1) two cards from one *quaternion* with preserved pagination, still connected (N.89/93); (2) one badly preserved card without pagination (N.87/93); (3) six small pieces (N.1/93, N.5/93, N.12/93, N.19/93, N.29/93, N.32/93). It is to be dated to the 9th/10th century on paleographical grounds.

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<sup>10</sup> H. Quecke, *Untersuchungen zum koptischen Stundengebet*, Louvain 1970, 97-100, 272-274; id., Psalmverse als "Hymnen" in der koptischen Liturgie, *Cahiers de la Bibliothèque Copte* 9, *Christianisme d'Égypte*, Paris-Louvain 1995, pp. 101-114.

<sup>11</sup> W. Stegemann, *Koptische Paläographie*, Heidelberg 1936, Taf. 23.

A similar two-column codex card (N.86/93) also comes from the 11th century in all probability; its condition did not permit text identification.

A separate group is constituted by magical texts which were also found in rooms D.21 and D.22 of the ancient monastic complex on kom D, but also in one of the as yet not fully explored hermitages, namely Hermitage 44<sup>12</sup> (N.11/93, N.21/93, N.74/93, N.44/95, N.45/95).

One should also mention a number of texts (about 17) which have not been identified so far but deserve attention: (1) two parchment cards (N.76/93, N.78/93) written down in an irregular uncial that is characteristic of documents. In this case the two texts appear to have been written by one hand; (2) a card (N.97/93) which appears to have been written by a not very fluent hand, characteristic of documents and very poorly preserved; (3) two equally poorly preserved fragments (N.11/95, N.20/95). All contain literary texts.

The remaining fragments of texts are too small to support a discussion of them at present.

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<sup>12</sup> W. Godlewski, Naqlun, Excavations 1995, *PAM* VII, 1995 (1996), pp. 74-79.