

UNITY AND DIVISION AMONG ASCETICS
IN SHENOUTE OF ATRIPE'S DISCOURSE *I HAVE BEEN*
READING THE HOLY GOSPELS*

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Shenoute of Atripe's (d. 465) literary corpus provides many challenges on both the codicological and interpretative fronts. This is certainly true of the section of the corpus known as the *Canons*, discussed in some detail by other contributors to this volume, and manuscripts of which have steadily appeared in published editions.ⁱ The *Canons* will remain a subject of analysis and debate into the foreseeable future. My concern, however, with Shenoute's writings lies elsewhere, primarily in the abbot's *Discourses*. They are texts (found in eight volumes now partially extant), mainly in the form of homilies or public addresses, and at times expository pieces, that illustrate interesting and multi-varied preoccupations on the part of Shenoute. While the *Canons* more often than not were intended to be read and adhered to as guidelines or rules for the male and female monks of Shenoute's three communities, the *Discourses* in the main address issues external to the White Monastery.ⁱⁱ *I Am Amazed*,ⁱⁱⁱ a lengthy work appearing in the seventh volume of the *Discourses* and which I have discussed elsewhere,^{iv} provides a literary mosaic of heretical groups, heretical practices, and examples of deviation from orthodox scriptural interpretation. *De Iudicio*^v and *The Lord Thundered*^{vi} are examples of works which focus on other matters, including Jews and pagans. Another sermon that illustrates the complex fixations of our abbot is entitled *I Have Been Reading the Holy Gospels*,^{vii} a work of some length as well, containing a fascinating investigation of Christian groups and their deviant practice around the White Monastery, to which I now turn.

That Shenoute delivered this particular sermon with the intent of discussing a number of issues, ranging from spiritual admonitions to graphic characterizations of irregular Christian practice, was not in itself an anomaly. As I have mentioned, there is ample evidence of his interest in heresy and its suppression in a number of other works, including for instance *We Will Speak in the Fear of God* (Discourses 8, Work 23),^{viii} a striking discussion of Melitians.^{ix} What I intend to discuss here is the specific objections Shenoute voiced against certain deviant practices by individuals near his community, and the peculiar determination to do so immediately in two concurrent contexts – the

aftermath of a momentous period in the history of the Christian East and the presence of a distinguished audience.

At the beginning of the sermon Shenoute does not state his motives explicitly. His language does become increasingly pointed over the course of his discourse,^x and his efficient use of rhetorical observations and argumentation, often painted against a background of scriptural allusions and imagery, may have been especially effective when heard by an informed audience such as the one he had that day. But the text deals with motifs and themes that lay heavy on the minds of his audience, and Shenoute addresses them in a deliberate manner. Problems which *I Have Been Reading the Holy Gospels* focuses on include the final judgment,^{xi} contempt for sin persisting among monks,^{xii} pagan practices among Christians,^{xiii} illicit marriages for priests or ascetic virgins,^{xiv} and communal striving for spiritual growth.^{xv} As a whole, the text presents a collective discussion of his views on the integrity of his own monastic institution in the face of diversity and dissent, instances of which quite likely were known to his listeners.

The dramatic opening of *I Have Been Reading the Holy Gospels* is well-known, especially since it is a first-hand source of the chronology of Shenoute's life.^{xvi} From it we know the elderly abbot was an octogenarian by the time he delivered this sermon in 431/432 CE, had been the leader of the White Monastery for over 45 years, and that he had just returned from the city of Ephesus, where in some capacity he accompanied Cyril of Alexandria during their time there to attend the ecumenical council. Though Shenoute does mention his important trip to Ephesus, he chooses not to discuss its results or what events he may have witnessed during his stay (or at any rate not explicitly).^{xvii} Most evidence indicates that he did not preach very often.^{xviii} His return, then, was a grand enough occasion to prompt him to speak before a large and expectedly excited gathering waiting to hear the abbot's personal recollections and report of an historic event. Shenoute does not fulfill their likely expectations, however, but takes the opportunity to present his own polemic against Christian individuals whose behavior is entirely unacceptable to the church.

He embarks on a meditation on Mt 25:31-32, a short passage that would remain the basis for his thoughts throughout the treatise. It is worth noting here:

“When the Son of Man comes” – Son of Man according to divine dispensation, God and Son of God according to divinity – “then He will sit on the throne of His glory, and all the nations will be assembled by His angels. They will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.” It is this saying which I have been investigating and concerning which I have been inquiring.^{xix}

Shenoute continues by asserting the impossibility of those whose character is malicious (that is, wolves) to mix with sheep. Both species may have been in the same sheepfold, even grazing in the same fields and drinking from the same troughs. But referring to deeds his community and others committed (and which he would discuss later), the two groups do not mix and are to be divided according to their works. Let the sheep attain their righteous rewards and may calamity befall the merciless. He concludes:

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Was it not the case that through the parable of the Lord the wise already understood that it is to separate the merciless from the merciful, the defiled from the pure, the adulterers from the good, and the godless unbelievers from the faithful men of God that He comes? So then, after the separation, will not each one (of us) cry out, weeping, with no one to hear him, when we observe those who have completed their life, pleasing God and shining through their good works?^{xx}

Shenoute's call for doctrinal correctness and uprightness in practice echoed in many of his works. His demand to do so was based in part on paying strict allegiance to the hierarchy of the church. He utilized his views on the church's hierarchy, and especially his pronounced loyalty to its leaders, to buttress his own authority and leadership, to ratify avenues of biblical interpretation and doctrinal promulgation that he would utilize in this sermon, and to garner further support for the Alexandrians he so zealously followed. His views would have been known to an audience of local clerics, and at times he singled them out. On several occasions it is clear that Shenoute was addressing an audience of clerics – priests, monks, and possibly bishops.^{xxi} The speaker leaves little doubt that respect for a defined and rigid hierarchy is the basis and source of orthodox doctrinal teaching. But at a later point in the treatise Shenoute also becomes occupied with irregular practice among some of these very clerics or their associates – unmarried priests and ascetics who abandoned their vows for marriage.

In Egyptian ascetic circles marriage was not consistently condemned or deemed unsuitable. In fact, Shenoute himself saw value in its spiritual benefit for some, seeing it as divinely granted to those “who are suited for it without shame.”^{xxii} But he denies this possibility to those who “brought shame upon themselves and clothed themselves with utter contempt, and took a wife or husband.” Judgment no longer is placed upon them for “they have judged themselves.” He extends this argument to a priest who compromises his own ordination by having accepted it without marrying first. Priests' ordinations may not have been invalidated in practice since they appear to still be active in their ministry. Rather, Shenoute's emphasis lies in the idea that marriage must precede ordination because vows essentially change one's inner and outer condition. In his view, a real marriage is accursed if it came to pass after a vow had previously been taken by the man: “So also a priest who has no wife, what will he do now that hands have been laid on him? Know, O priests, that we judge ourselves alone.” Shenoute is adamant that clerics are more accountable for their actions as a result of their prior commitment to a particular religious life and especially due to their position as leaders. By quoting a familiar Pauline argument (Rom 2:1) on divine judgment, he places the blame on his subjects for failing to uphold their duty and life-long commitment. His rhetorical pursuit of the “truth,” as he puts it, may even indicate that his views were opposed by members of those present.

Shenoute's admonitions about irregular marriages in the text are among several criticisms of ascetic practice with which he dealt in the vicinity of the White Monastery.

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In this particular case, he argued against these marriages using an unknown Athanasian work on virginity which effectively addresses the matter. He states:

Who will be able to say that this is not the truth, except he who fights against the truth? If there is one who does not accept these remarks, let him not dare reject fearlessly the words of the richest of men in Christ, the archbishop Abba Athanasius...He said, "For the virgin who falls away, it is not to marriage that she is brought down. Rather, it is to the ultimate or worst rank that she is brought. For, having been exalted above what is good and leapt upward to what is perfect, then being found, God forbid, going down to worse evils, and thinking that it is good to have taken a husband, she is found last. For the fall from virginity is not a marriage. Even though it is a *marriage*, it is altogether fraudulent, shameful, and regressive from what is good. And it is in shame that her life will exist, for she was taken from the community, she who had strength to complete her life with boldness and would have received great honor."^{xxiii}

In addition to utilizing the weight of an Athanasian work to present his argument, Shenoute appeals to scriptural authority here to further prove his point. His citing of Lev 21:9 (the fornication of priests' daughters) is particularly poignant for a clerical audience, and further demonstrates Shenoute's tendency to use scripture and patristic sources to stress a critical point to his monks.

Transgressions against ascetic vows appear to have become somewhat commonplace near or within Shenoute's community. Their occurrence prompts him to address the perpetrators at several points during his sermon. Early on he counts those who perform "acts of fornication, and those contrary to nature and other wicked deeds"^{xxiv} along with idolaters. He further condemns them in other parts of the text, attempting to convince his listeners of God's impending judgement. It is one thing if the speaker rejects such acts, but completely another when "holy prophets reveal their contempt, likening them to menstrual rags and a menstruating woman. For those who undertake such pollution of this sort are worse than the shamelessness of a whore."^{xxv} But Shenoute does not stop here. Again he validates his views by further graphic characterizations, likening individual's hedonistic character not only to whores, but also to the flesh of asses and horses.^{xxvi} It is their perseverance in sensuality that has become their peril. Upon their entry into Gehenna, they along with those who follow them will hear: "Depart from me, O you who are cursed, to the eternal fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mt 25:41).^{xxvii}

In *I Have Been Reading the Holy Gospels*, the abominable acts of certain Christian leaders were condemned, causing them to no longer be able to seek rest in prayer or meditation,^{xxviii} and Shenoute invokes additional scriptural commands to measure their conduct. He asks, "If I say that the scripture sets the measure for the purity of the body, about what it can and cannot do, what further will we say concerning wickedness?" He continues, "Why did we not understand that it is something important for us to keep our body holy since it was said of the one who is unable to keep (this rule), 'Let him marry?' (1 Cor 7:9)."^{xxix} Shenoute's conclusions may be predictable, but resonant with an attentive audience such as the one he had that day. He finally asks the

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transgressors “not to emulate those who are wicked or those who commit lawless acts. ‘For they will soon fade like the grass, and wither like the green herb’ (Ps 36:2 [LXX]).” He holds that their end is nothing but destruction (Phil 3:19), but “blessed are those who await the Lord and keep his way (cf. Acts 18:25), for it is they whom He will exalt to inherit the earth (cf. Mt 5:5; Ps 36:34).”^{xxx}

His skill in presenting scripture as fact and ultimate authority, “warnings of this sort” as he refers to them at one point,^{xxxii} was enhanced by his use of the prophetic books, and especially Ezekiel. The placement of his teachings within the tradition of Old Testament warnings and condemnations of lapses by one-time believers, and especially his veiled claim to foresight and future peril of disobedient Christians, adds to what we already know of the abbot’s prophetic aura. To place himself in Ezekiel’s position, and align Christian enemies with such evil figures as Elam, Assur, Mosoch, Thobel, and others “in the place in which there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, in the darkness and the pits of Amente,” is illustrative of his vision as a quasi-prophetic teacher of authority.^{xxxii}

Shenoute’s discussion of deviations from regular ascetic routines provided an opportunity for him also to pursue positive and reinforcing themes. I cite two here – the spiritual unity of his own community in the face of such external plurality in Christian discipline, and his own position as teacher standing before such dignitaries. Towards the former objective Shenoute used three illustrations of co-operative spiritual striving to emphasize the mutual benefit of a common goal among a community of monks. If individuals struggle onwards, each according to his own measure, they as a group will not be divided from other greater saints who have already completed their lives.^{xxxiii}

In the first parable Shenoute relates the story of a man and his sons, hired as fruit pickers, who chose not to compete in the amount of product they produced, but rather relied on each other’s strength and combined what they had gathered, thus earning their reward as one. Both their hearts and their hands were united, relying on each other’s capacities while respecting their weaknesses. In another story, inhabitants of a certain town gathered for a local wedding. Again, they all participated in the preparations for the celebration,

each one according to his ability – those occupied with the sheep, those occupied with the goat(s), and those who availed themselves in that which they had and that which they were able to prepare – they joined each other (at the wedding) as though (they were) one people.^{xxxiv}

Shenoute’s fostering of unity was also portrayed in a third and final parable of spiritual ascent. In this example, men are required to climb up ladders, though each one climbs at his own pace – some three rungs at a time, some two, and another just one. Then there is the slowest among them, one who “raises one foot upon a rung and draws his other foot to its place, or perhaps even struggles to climb.” Shenoute then poses the question, “Do they not deserve to be praised?” His answer is predictable. Each man took risks until he was able to ascend, and thus will be rewarded for having exerted such effort without

allowing their own weaknesses or inability to hinder them. Each will receive mercy as compensation for their efforts.

In these three and other illustrations in *I Have Been Reading the Holy Gospels* the theme of unity of purpose is prevalent. While any number of workers may utilize different methods towards achieving the same goal, the goal itself is noble, and more importantly their methods do not hinder one another. Shenoute's approach is in fact refreshing. In a context of spiritual athletes, as the Egyptian desert certainly was, it was easy to conclude that some monks simply could not compete. Shenoute maintains that this is the wrong approach to understanding the message of the Gospels. Each one is in fact measured according to his own ability, each can work within a group towards fulfillment for himself and the community as a whole, and each will receive his just reward. While the interior life is a major concern in many monastic works in late antique Egypt,^{xxxv} Shenoute's main interest lies in the welfare of the community as a whole, despite its individual strengths and weaknesses, and its willingness to remain upright relative to other Christian practice in the region of the White Monastery. The abbot thus provides a radical revision of an elitism that is otherwise often encountered in Egyptian monastic circles.

What is also essential to this idea of unity is Shenoute's role within his community. Any willingness to leave the community, or to criticize it as an outsider is absent in this and other homilies. Contrary to recent conclusions, the primary evidence clearly indicates that Shenoute does not place a boundary between his own purity as a leader, and the righteousness of the White Monastery's inhabitants.^{xxxvi} Our text is but one example of Shenoute's desire to designate himself as one edifying monk among many:

I confess to you that I speak the truth when I say that it did not enter my heart at all that I am teaching or that I am scolding those who are listening to a word from me. Rather, I am speaking to those in front of me about the salvation of us all.^{xxxvii}

Shenoute returns to the importance of scripture when addressing and correcting improper behavior. He asserts that scripture gives authority to the tongue of the teacher, and Shenoute is one such teacher.^{xxxviii} His argument also assumes some contention regarding who can or cannot teach. The question of who can teach correctly was addressed in several sermons, including *I Have Been Reading the Holy Gospels*. Thus the emphatic statement, "It is the Lord, who is over the whole earth, who will give the instructing tongue to the upright teacher, and the ear to him who listens correctly"^{xxxix} is a clear indication of the command that Shenoute wields, but also the duty he sees in his leadership. His frankness with an audience that is being told what to do and what to say may have been a heavy-handed tactic, but it was a necessity: "If I have other things or words and I did not say them, I will owe you a debt. But if I did not hide what is clear to me, not speaking of it, then you are in debt to me!"^{xl} The obvious result of such a claim is Shenoute's self-placement among a select group of ecclesiastical authorities who had the privilege to expound on scripture and set limits on Christian practice. In fact, he

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places himself squarely among the privileged episcopal and clerical dignitaries who visited him that day.

A number of works from Shenoute's *Discourses*, including *I Have Been Reading the Holy Gospels*, serve as windows into the abbot's world, and especially his weight and involvement in the Egyptian church's affairs. These texts have certainly illuminated for us a few of his views on the desired limits of Christian practice and orthodoxy in his region. Shenoute's use of a patristic source, the wide breadth of scriptural knowledge he displayed, as well as his pointed concern with irregular ascetic and liturgical practice, all underlie his main achievement as a Christian leader of the Panopolitan region in the mid-fifth century. The promulgation and maintenance of a Christian tradition wholly loyal to Alexandrian authority and doctrinal policy, and the teachings he brought forth, were germane in his view to the life of the monastery and the local church. Unity, loyalty, and above all, a concern with one's salvation as achieved through his prescribed approach were the flagship issues in this particular text. *I Have Been Reading the Holy Gospels* is but one important example of Shenoute's active rhetoric in combating deviant behavior. His attempts at constructing a theological and practical framework for his monastery was a mandatory by-product of the White Monastery's diverse Christian environment.

* I am grateful to Janet Timbie for insightful remarks on an earlier draft of this paper, and to her and David Johnson for guidance in early stages of research on works by Shenoute discussed here.

ⁱ The following is a partial list of the recent work that has appeared: D. W. Young, "Two Unplaced Fragments From a Copy of Shenoute's *Sixth Canon*," *Göttinger Miszellen* 189 (2002): 99-108; idem, "An Unplaced Fragment From Shenoute's *Fourth Canon*," *Journal of Coptic Studies* 3 (2001): 133-147; idem, "P. Vindob. K 917 and the *Third Canon* of Shenoute," in *Wiener Papyri: Als Festgabe zum 60. Geburtstag von Hermann Harrauer (P. Harrauer)*, ed. B. Palme (Vienna: Holzhausen, 2001), 27-33; idem, "With Respect to the Fourth Work of Shenoute's *Sixth Canon*," *Göttinger Miszellen* 179 (2000): 85-100; idem, "Shenoute's *Fifth Canon* in Three Folios at the National Library in Vienna," *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 31 (2001): 187-208; idem, "Five Leaves from a Copy of Shenoute's *Third Canon*," *Le Muséon* 113 (2000): 263-294; idem, "Additional Fragments of Shenoute's *Eighth Canon*," *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 44 (1998): 47-68; idem, "Pages from a Copy of Shenoute's *Eighth Canon*," *Orientalia* 67 (1998): 64-84; idem, "Two Leaves from a Copy of Shenoute's *Ninth Canon*," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 88 (1998): 281-301. Further discussions of these and other portions of the *Canons* have appeared in H. Behlmer, "The City as Metaphor in the Works of Two Panopolitans: Shenoute and Besa," in *Perspectives on Panopolis: An Egyptian Town from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest*, ed. A. Egberts, B.P. Muhs, and J. Van der Vliet (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2002), 13-27; eadem, "Visitors to Shenoute's Monastery," in *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt*, ed. D. Frankfurter (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1998), 341-371; eadem, "Index der Lehnwörter und Namen in Amélineau, *Œuvres de Shenoudi*," *Enchoria* 24 (1997-98): 1-33; S. Emmel, "From the Other Side of the Nile: Shenoute and Panopolis," in *Perspectives*, ed. Egberts et al., 95-113; idem, "The Historical Circumstances of Shenoute's Sermon *God Is Blessed*," in *QEMELIA: Spätantike und Koptologische Studien Peter Grossman zum 65. Geburtstag*, eds. M. Krause and S. Schaten (Wiesbaden: Verlag, 1998), 81-96; R. Krawiec, *Shenoute and the Women of the White Monastery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); eadem, "Space, Distance, and Gender: Authority and the Separation of Communities in the White Monastery," *Bulletin of the American Society of*

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Papyrologists 35 (1998): 45-63; B. Layton, "Social Structure and Food Consumption in an Early Christian Monastery: The Evidence of Shenoute's *Canons* and the White Monastery Federation A.D. 385-465," *Le Muséon* 115 (2002): 25-55; T. Orlandi, "The Library of the Monastery of Saint Shenute at Atripe," in *Perspectives*, ed. Egberts et al., 211-231; C. Schroeder, "Disciplining the Monastic Body: Asceticism, Ideology, and Gender in the Egyptian Monastery of Shenoute of Atripe" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2002); see also A. Camplani, "Un Episodio della Ricezione del PERI EUCHS in Egitto: Note Di Eresiologia Shenutiana," in *Atti del I Convegno del Gruppo Italiano di Ricerca su "Origene e la Tradizione Alessandrina"*, ed. F. Cocchini, *Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum* 57 (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1997), 159-172; J. Timbie, "A Liturgical Procession in the Desert of Apa Shenoute," in *Pilgrimage*, ed. Frankfurter, 415-441; and C.E. Hammock, "Dualism and the Religious Thought of Shenoute of Atripe," *Coptic Church Review* 21 (2000): 119-131.

ⁱⁱ I make this distinction with the awareness that some works within the *Discourses* also address issues such as community behavior *within* the monastery. See for instance *Righteous Art Thou, O Lord* (Discourses 5, Work 4; cf. S. Emmel, "Shenoute's Literary Corpus" [Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1993], 924-927).

ⁱⁱⁱ Cf. Emmel, "Shenoute's Literary Corpus," 939-940 and 943-946. The edition of Shenoute's *I Am Amazed* is found in T. Orlandi, *Shenute contra Origenistas: Testo con introduzione e traduzione* (Rome: Centro Italiano Microfiches, 1985). See also E. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 151-158; M. Foat, "I Myself Have Seen: The Representation of Humanity in the Writings of Apa Shenoute of Atripe" (Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 1996); T. Orlandi, "A Catechesis against Apocryphal Texts by Shenute and the Gnostic Texts of Nag Hammadi," *Harvard Theological Review* 75 (1982): 85-95; and S. Shoemaker, "Shenoute's *Contra Origenistas* and Gnosticism in Fifth-Century Upper Egypt" (paper delivered at the North American Patristic Society Annual Meeting, Chicago, May 1994). The title for the treatise given in Orlandi's edition is unattested, and I have thus chosen to adopt the original title of the work (see Emmel, "Shenoute's Literary Corpus," 943-946). Forthcoming textual criticism on the edition of the treatise is being undertaken by Janet Timbie.

^{iv} M. Moussa, "I Am Amazed: Shenoute of Atripe's Endorsement of Alexandrian Theology in the White Monastery," *Bulletin of the Saint Shenouda Coptic Society* 5 (1998-1999): 19-40.

^v H. Behlmer, *Schenute von Atripe: De iudicio* (Turin, Museo Egizio, Cat. 63000, cod. IV) (Turin: Museo egizio, 1996); see also eadem, "Historical evidence from Shenoute's *De extremo iudicio*," in *Sesto Congresso Internazionale di Egittologia: Atti* (Turin: Società italiana per il gas p.A., 1993), 2:11-19.

^{vi} Cf. Emmel, "Shenoute's Literary Corpus," 891-892 and 897-898 for a brief discussion of this work.

^{vii} See S. Emmel, "Shenoute's Literary Corpus," 951-953, for a brief codicological discussion of manuscript witnesses for this work, which are White Monastery codices AV, DT, FZ, GP, FZ, HD, and ZP. The system of referring to codices of the White Monastery, and principally of Shenoute's works, were developed by Orlandi and Emmel for the Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari project; cf. T. Orlandi, "The Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari," *Computers and the Humanities* 24 (1990): 297-405. Most scholarship on this treatise appeared much earlier this century (although its exact codicological structure was not determined then) as a result of work undertaken by the following: É. Amélineau, *Oeuvres de Shenoudi: Texte copte et traduction française*, 2 vols. (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1907-1914); H. Guérin, "Sermons inédits de Senouti," *Revue Égyptologique* 10 (1902): 148-164; 11 (1904): 15-34; J. Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Archimandritae Vita et Opera Omnia*, 3 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1906-1913); H. E. Winlock, W. E. Crum, and H. G. Evelyn-White, *The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes*, 2 vols. (New York: *Living for Eternity: The White Monastery and its Neighborhood. Proceedings of a Symposium at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, March 6 - 9. 2003.* Ed. Philip Sellw. <http://egypt.cla.umn.edu/eventsr.html> (© 2009 the Regents of the University of Minnesota and the individual authors).

Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1926); and D.W. Young, *Coptic Manuscripts from the White Monastery: Works of Shenoute* (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 1993). Portions of the treatise found in Codex FZ have posthumously appeared in R.-G. Coquin, “Le Traité de Shenoute ‘Du Salut de l’Âme Humaine,’” *Journal of Coptic Studies* 3 (2001): 1-43. The remaining unedited manuscripts of the treatise, along with a new and complete English translation and commentary, is in my “The Treatise *I Have Been Reading the Holy Gospels* by Abba Shenoute of Atri (Discourses 8, Work 1): Coptic Text, Translation, and Commentary” (Ph.D. diss., The Catholic University of America, forthcoming). The call system devised for Coptic manuscript collections is that of S. Emmel, *An International Directory of Institutions Holding Collections of Coptic Antiquities outside of Egypt* (Rome: Centro Italiano Microfiches, 1990). See also idem, “Shenoute’s Literary Corpus,” 72-83. Citations of unedited text are by codex and manuscript page. All translations from the Coptic text are my own unless otherwise noted.

^{viii} Cf. Emmel, “Shenoute’s Literary Corpus,” 954-955.

^{ix} For a discussion of Melitian presence in Egypt, see A. Camplani, “In Margine alla Storia dei Meliziani,” *Augustinianum* 30 (1990): 313-351; S.T. Carroll, “The Meletian Schism: Coptic Christianity and the Egyptian Church” (Ph.D. diss., University of Miami, 1989); J. Goehring, “Monastic Diversity and Ideological Boundaries in Fourth-Century Christian Egypt,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 5 (1997): 61-83; idem, “Melitian Monastic Organization: A Challenge to Pachomian Originality,” *Studia Patristica* 25 (1993): 388-395; F.H. Kettler, “Der melitianische Streit in Ägypten,” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde des Urchristentums* 35 (1936): 155-193; and M. Moussa, “Abba Shenoute and the Melitians: Polemics and Conflict with Formation, Ideology, and Practice of a Separatist Monastic Community,” *Coptica* 1 (2002): 91-101.

^x My notion of a “discourse,” aside from technical issues, involves Shenoute’s effort to blend his visions of correct use of Christian literature and controlled social practice. See D. Brakke, “The Early Church in North America: Late Antiquity, Theory, and the History of Christianity,” *Church History* 71 (2002): 473-491, at 485.

^{xi} The Coptic text appears in GP 1-4 ([AT-NB 9296-9297] Young, *Coptic Manuscripts*, 123-127) followed by HD 3-4 ([FR-BN 131⁶ f. 56] Young, *Coptic Manuscripts*, 127-128). Parallel texts appear in AV 139-143 ([GB-OB CP.b. 4 ff. 13-15r] Leipoldt, *Sinuthii*, 3:218-222 [A] and Amélineau, *Oeuvres* 1:180-185), and FZ 103-108 ([EG-CF 105r] Coquin, “Le Traité,” 6-11).

^{xii} See the previously unpublished DT 55-58 (GB-BL 3581A ff. 159-160), an edition and translation of which is to appear in my forthcoming dissertation. A parallel text (GP 65:a.1 to 66.a.18 [FR-PL E. 10612 f. 1; Guérin, “Sermons,” 10:159]) begins at DT 57.b.11 (a correction from Emmel’s listing of “57.ii.9” as it appears in his “Shenoute’s Literary Corpus,” 1155).

^{xiii} See GP 72 ([FR-PL E. 10612 f. 4v; Guérin, “Sermons,” 10:160]).

^{xiv} See my discussion below and nos. 22 and 23.

^{xv} See my discussion below and no. 34.

^{xvi} GP 1 (AT-NB 9296r): “I have been reading the holy gospels all this time – for more than 60 years – and I have been expounding them for more than 43 years, since my holy fathers rested. And when this saying was revealed to me, I understood it right then in this very year after we returned from Ephesus.” See Young, *Coptic Manuscripts*, 123-124 for the edition of GP 1. The opening text also appears in HD 1 ([FR-BN 130⁵ f. 70r] Leipoldt, *Sinuthii*, 3:218-219 [B] and Amélineau, *Oeuvres* 1:180), AV 139 ([GB-OB CP.b. 4 f. 13r] Leipoldt, *Sinuthii*, 3:218-219 [A] and Amélineau, *Oeuvres* 1:180), and FZ 103 ([EG-CF 104r] Coquin, “Le Traité,” 6), with the variation “our holy fathers” appearing in the latter. The “saying” to which Shenoute refers is Mt 25:31-32 (see below).

^{xvii} Shenoute also mentions his voyage to Ephesus in *Since It Is Necessary to Pursue the Devil* (Discourses 8, Work 2 and Discourses 4, Work 29), a work dated to 432/433; cf. Emmel, “Shenoute’s Literary Corpus,” 892 and 898-899.

^{xviii} Emmel, “Shenoute’s Literary Corpus,” 877-878 and Behlmer, “Pilgrimage,” 342.

^{xix} Shenoute’s claim that he has gained sudden understanding of this saying is quite likely only rhetorical. It may be understood, however, in his seeing heretics (such as Nestorius at the Council of Ephesus, from which he had just returned) separated from orthodox Christians by a divinely guided church and its leaders. The Coptic text appears in GP 1 ([AT-NB 9296r] Young, *Coptic Manuscripts*, 124), HD 1 ([FR-BN 130⁵ f. 70r] Leipoldt, *Sinuthii*, 3:219 [B] and Amélineau, *Oeuvres* 1:180-181), AV 139 ([GB-OB CP.b. 4 f. 13r] Leipoldt, *Sinuthii*, 3:219 [A] and Amélineau, *Oeuvres* 1:180-181), and FZ 103-104 ([EG-CF 104r and 104v] Coquin, “Le Traité,” 6-7).

^{xx} The Coptic text appears in GP 3 ([AT-NB 9297r] Young, *Coptic Manuscripts*, 125-126), HD 2-3 ([FR-BN 130⁵ f. 70v followed by FR-BN 131⁶ f. 56r] Leipoldt, *Sinuthii*, 3:220 [B] followed by Young, *Coptic Manuscripts*, 127), AV 141 ([GB-OB CP.b. 4 f. 14r] Leipoldt, *Sinuthii*, 3:220 [A] and Amélineau, *Oeuvres* 1:182), and FZ 105 ([EG-CF 105r] Coquin, “Le Traité,” 8).

^{xxi} FZ 105-106 ([EG-CF 105r and 105v] Coquin, “Le Traité,” 8-9), DT 55 (GB-BL 3581A f. 159r), DT 58 (GB-BL 3581A f. 160v), and GP 87-88 ([FR-PL E. 10612 f. 12] Guérin, “Sermons,” 10:163). The DT manuscripts, previously unpublished, appear in my forthcoming dissertation.

^{xxii} DT 58 (GB-BL 3581A f. 160v) and GP 65-66 ([FR-PL E. 10612 f. 1] Guérin, “Sermons,” 10:159) for this and the following quotations.

^{xxiii} GP 66-67 ([FR-PL E. 10612 f. 1r and f. 2v] Guérin, “Sermons,” 10:159) Italics are my emphasis. The Athanasian quotation is from an unknown writing for which a title is not given by Shenoute. In addition to Guérin, “Sermons,” 10:159, this excerpt was edited by L.-Th. Lefort, *S. Athanase: Lettres Festales et Pastorales en Copte* (Louvain: Imprimerie Orientaliste, 1955), 108.20 – 109.4. D. Brakke in his “The Authenticity of the Ascetic Athanasiana.” *Orientalia* 63 (1994): 17-56, at 40-41, does not identify a Greek original for this work (CPG 2150), nor is there another instance of it in a Coptic text. Brakke’s assessment of the piece is as follows: “The content of the fragment does not cohere well with that of the genuine Athanasiana...It is possible that Athanasius wrote these stern sentences, but without any positive parallel the excerpt is too brief to make a certain conclusion.”

^{xxiv} FZ 112 ([EG-CF 108v] Coquin, “Le Traité,” 15). A parallel text appears in the unpublished ZP 10-11 (FR-PL E. 10608 f. 1v and f. 2r), an edition and translation of which is to appear in my forthcoming dissertation.

^{xxv} Shenoute here alludes to Ezek 36:17 and Isa 64:5.

^{xxvi} Shenoute perhaps mindful of Ezek 23:19 for “whores,” and Ezek 23:20 and Jer 2:23-24 for “asses and horses.”

^{xxvii} DT 51 (FR-BN 130⁵ f. 57r) and AV 193 (FR-BN 130² f. 86r). Both manuscript pages are unpublished.

^{xxviii} DT 55 (GB-BL 3581A f. 159r).

^{xxix} DT 57 (GB-BL 3581A f. 160r).

^{xxx} FZ 110 ([EG-CF 107v] Coquin, “Le Traité,” 13). A parallel text appears in GP 9 (Young, *Coptic Manuscripts*, 130-131).

^{xxxi} DT 51 (FR-BN 130⁵ f. 57r) and AV 193 (FR-BN 130² f. 86r).

^{xxxii} His listing of these other figures is in GP 71. For Elam: Ezek 38:5; Assur: Ezek 16:28; Mosoch and Thobel: Ezek 32:26. He also discusses these figures in the context of “deceitful and false apostles” as well as apparent pagans.

^{xxxiii} FZ 115 ([DE-BS 1613 f. 5r] Coquin, “Le Traité,” 18).

^{xxxiv} For an analysis of the syntax of this difficult passage from FZ 116 ([DE-BS 1613 f. 5v] Coquin, “Le Traité,” 19) and HD 13 ([FR-BN 131⁶ f. 57r] Young, *Coptic Manuscripts*, 131-132), see the discussion in my forthcoming dissertation.

^{xxxv} See for example M. Sheridan, “The Development of the Interior Life in Certain Early Monastic Writings in Egypt,” in *The Spirituality of Ancient Monasticism: Acts of the International Colloquium held in Cracow-Tyniec, 16-19th November 1994*, ed. M. Starowieyski (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Benedyktynów, 1995), 91-104.

^{xxxvi} As argued by Kraweic, *Women of the White Monastery*, 53.

^{xxxvii} GP 68 ([FR-PL E. 10612 f. 2v; Guérin, “Sermons,” 10:159]).

^{xxxviii} GP 69 ([FR-PL E. 10612 f. 3r; Guérin, “Sermons,” 10:159-160]).

^{xxxix} GP 70 ([FR-PL E. 10612 f. 3v; Guérin, “Sermons,” 10:160]).

^{xl} GP 68-69 ([FR-PL E. 10612 f. 2v and f. 3r; Guérin, “Sermons,” 10:159-160]).