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COPTIC LITURGICAL TEXTS RELATING TO AGATHON THE STYLITE

Textos litúrgicos coptos sobre San Agatón el estilite

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Abstract

While Egypt was the cradle of monasticism since Antony, the stylite type of monasticism is rarely represented in the Coptic corpus of monastic literature. Hence every text will contribute to our knowledge. In this article, we will highlight the importance of the city of Sakha, in the book of *history of the Patriarchs*, the book of the *Churches and Monasteries* (twelfth century). The liturgical texts relating to this saint are exceedingly rare, hence the importance publishing all texts. We will edit, translate all the liturgical texts relating to one of this group, we were able to find a doxology Batos not attested in most of the manuscripts as well as the texts of the Antiphonarium (Difnar). It is important to mention that this saint lived in Lower-Egypt around the sixth-seventh century which means that it was around the time of important events such as the usurper of Phocas, the Persian invasion, the Byzantine reconquest, and the Arabic conquest. He was influenced by the biography of the great Simon the Stylite. Nowadays, no traces of his cult survive in Sakha which explains the rarity of manuscripts containing anything relating to this saint, however Sakha is nowadays known as a step of the journey of the Holy Family.

Keywords: Coptic monasticism; Coptic Liturgy; History; Late Antiquity in Egypt; Coptic Manuscript; Agathon the Stylite; Monastic Order.

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Resumen

Aunque Egipto fue la cuna del monacato desde San Antonio, el tipo de monacato estilita pocas veces es abordado en el *corpus copto* sobre literatura monástica. En este artículo se resalta la importancia de la ciudad de Saja, el libro de la *Historia de los Patriarcas*, y el libro de las *Iglesias y Monasterios* (s. XII). Los textos litúrgicos sobre San Agatón el estilita son sumamente raros, de allí la importancia de su publicación. Por lo tanto, aquí se editan y traducen todos los textos litúrgicos relacionados con esta temática. Además, se encontró una doxología a la melodía de Batos que no está declarada en casi ninguno de los manuscritos ni en los textos del *Difnar* (*Antifonario*). Es relevante mencionar que este santo vivió en el bajo Egipto alrededor de los siglos VI y VII, lo cual significa que fue cronológicamente cercano a acontecimientos importantes como la usurpación de Focas, la invasión persa, la reconquista bizantina y la conquista árabe. Asimismo, fue influenciado por la biografía de Simeón Estilita el Viejo. En la actualidad no existe ningún rastro de su culto en Saja, lo cual explica la escasez de manuscritos que contengan información sobre él. A pesar de esto, Saja es conocida en la actualidad como un paso del viaje de la Sagrada Familia.

Palabras clave: Monacato copto; Liturgia copta; Historia; Antigüedad tardía en Egipto; Manuscrito copto; Agatón el estilita; Orden monástica.

Introduction

While Egypt was the cradle of monasticism since Antony, the stylite type of monasticism is rarely represented in the Coptic corpus of monastic literature. Agathon is one of few Egyptian monks to be a stylite on a pillar near Sakha. While the city is well attested in Coptic history, amazingly enough we do not find any traces about this saint.

In this paper, we will overview the history of the church in Sakha from the available sources, such as the book of the *History of the Patriarchs* or the *Book of the Churches and Monasteries*. then we will study the veneration of Agathon the Stylite in the liturgical calendars. We will study the liturgical texts relating to Agathon the Stylite with a brief commentary. Finally, we will make a short a conclusion.

Sakha

In the fourth century,

The name of Sakha is a stronghold of Christianity. According to the martyrdoms of the great persecution in the fourth century, we know that there was a priest called Anua, priest of Sakha that the two brothers Piroou and Athom (Hyvernats, 1886-1887, p. 135-173) collected his relics of and deposited them in the church at Sunbat (Viaud, 1979, p. 26; Viaud, 1991, p. 1968a-1975b).

Balana (feast day: 8 Abib), a priest from Bara in Sakha district who sold his goods and distributed the proceeds to the poor. He professed his faith before the governor Arianus in Antinoopolis and was tortured and beheaded.

The seat of Sakha is mentioned in a letter written by Athanasius (Timm, 1992, pp. 2686-2694).

Agathon was contemporary to the great bishop Zacharias of Sakha (Müller, 1991, pp. 2368a- 2369a; Evelyn-White, 1932, pp. 276-280) and Agathon like him was disciple of the Abraham and George (Coquin, 1991, pp. 12a-13a) the disciples of John the Hegumen of Scetis (Zanetti, 1996, pp. 273-405) “the last great saints” (Evelyn-White, 1932. pp. 278-280).

Sakha in the book of *the History of the patriarchs*

In the sixth century

Severus of Antioch reposed in Sakha in the year 538 in the house of local notable called Dorotheus.²

In the seventh century

From Sakha at this time also came one of the compilers of the *History of the Patriarchs*, a monk named George (Jurja or Mirka) from the monastery of St. Macarius.³

During the patriarchate of Agathon the patriarch (661-677) (who is also contemporary to Agathon the Stylite) an incident showing the state of confusion between Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians occurred in the city of Sakha, which was predominantly under the influence of a Chalcedonian majority. It had a magistrate, an archon by the name of Isaac, who, in conjunction with its Muslim governor, was able to prevail over the Chalcedonian majority. The viceroy of Egypt at the time was Maslamah ibn Makhlad ibn Samir al-Ansari (667-689). He sent seven bishops to Sakha to make an inquiry into the accusation that some officials had been branded. Together with Isaac, who was obviously a follower of Agathon the patriarch, the situation was clarified, and the accused were absolved. The life of Agathon the Stylite does not make any allusion to this event, which took place in his city.⁴

The patriarch Isaac (686-689AD) was a disciple of Zacharias the bishop of Sais, (Porcher, 1915, pp. 14-15) and before his ordination, there was another candidate called George from Sakha (Evetts, 1909, p. 276 [22]) which shows that Sakha maintained its reputation.

2 For the primitive of this book cf. Seybold, 1912, pp. 83. For the Vulgata cf. Seybold, 1904, pp. 90. Evetts, 1909, p. 193. For other sources cf. also Youssef, 2004, p. 504 [140]-505[141]; Id, Youssef, 2006, p. 66-67.

3 Moawad, 2014, pp. 4-18; Atiya, 1991, pp. 20a-20b. For the primitive of this book cf. Seybold, 1912, pp. 120.

4 For the primitive of this book cf. Seybold, 1912, pp. 114-115. For the Vulgata cf., Evetts, 1909, p. 9 [263]. Müller, 1991, pp. 65a-66b.

In the ninth –Tenth centuries

The prosperity of Sakha continued as this is apparent from the biography of the patriarch Cosmas (851-858) who died while he was preparing a church in the diocese of Sakha (Abd al-Masih & Burmester, 1943, pp. 12 – 17, Translation: Labib, 1991, pp. 636b- 637b).

His successor Kha'il III, (880-907AD) (Labib, 1991, pp. 1412b-1413a). When he went to consecrate the church of Ptolomy at Sakha, when the bishop of Sakha was absent, the patriarch offered the liturgy which made the bishop angry and the dared to throw the oblation. By the end, the patriarch excommunicated the bishop and ordained another one (Abd al-Masih & Burmester, 1948, p. 70, (text) pp.103-104.).

In the Eleventh century

The bishop of Sakha, John known as Ibn al-Zalim, the scribe before his episcopate led a group of bishops and a body of the priests of Alexandria to go to Cairo and they made agreement to depose the father Christodoulos from the patriarchate as John the bishop of Sakha had quarrel with the patriarch. This plot was unsuccessful (Abd al-Masih & Burmester, 1959, pp. 172-173 (text), pp. 260-262 (translation)). This bishop John of Sakha was also among the delegation that chose Cyril II (Labib, 1991, pp. 675b-677a) the successor of Christodoulos (Abd al-Masih & Burmester, 1959, p. 207 (text), p. 321 (translation)).

In the *book of the churches and Monasteries* Twelfth century

According to the *book of the churches and Monasteries* ascribed to Abū al Makarim⁵ mentions about the church of al Mahallah al-Kubra, that was renovated in the reign of Senutiū who is Shenūde the 65th from the number of the Patriarchs and the bishop Anba Maqarah the bishop of Sakha in the year 754 of the Martyrs (1038AD) (Al-Suriani, 1984, fol.b-33a). While talking about Sakha, he highlights that it has a church named after the Virgin Mary where Severus of Antioch used to dwell in it, and another church named after the Archangel Michael, a third one dedicate to saint Cyr and two churches named after George and finally a church in Difraya near Sakha named after the Virgin and known also for the many miracles that took place in it (Al-Suriani, 1984, fol. 34a-b).

The same author narrates the conflict between the bishop of Sakha and the Patriarch Kha'il III the 46th (744-767) (Labib, 1991, p. 1410b-1412a) and how he excommunicated that bishop.⁶ Finally Abū al-Makarim states that according to the *history of the Patriarchs* that the biography of Theodosius the

5 Our references refer to the edition of Samuel al-Suriani, 1984, Vol. 1 Cairo 1084, and also Evetts and Butler, 1895. For specific studies cf. Samuel al-Suriani, 1990, p. 78. (For codicology and Composition) Zanetti, 1995, p. 85-133. (For the Authorship and Influence) Den Heijer, 1993, pp. 209-219. (Social study of the Delta) Martin, 1997, pp. 181-199. Martin, 1998, pp. 45-49. Martin, 2000, p.83-92. Martin, 2004, p.313-320. Youssef, 1998-1999, p. 45-54. den Heijer, 2007, p. 91-107. Mouton and Popescu-Belis, 2006, p.: 1-53.

6 al-Suriani, 1984 ,fol. 38a-b, this event is relating to Kha'il III the 56th patriarch not the Kha'il I the 46th cf. supra.

patriarch the 33rd that Dorotheus from Sakha restored and built monasteries and keeps instead of what were destroyed by the impious king Justinian and his companions (Al-Suriani, 1984, fol. 73b).

Conclusion

Despite the abundant data that we possess about the city of Sakha, nothing is mentioned about Agathon the Stylite which means that from the seventh to the twelfth centuries, there was no veneration for Agathon.

The Calendars

The Synaxarion on the 14 Tūt (Forget, 1905, p. 76 ; Basset, 1904, p. 364[150]) commemorates:

The Departure of St. Agathon the Stylite

On this day St. Agathon the Stylite, departed. He was from the city of Tannīs. The name of his father was Matra and his mother's name was Mariam. They were righteous and feared God. They loved to give alms and be merciful to the poor and needy. The thought of monasticism was always on his mind. When he was 35 years old, he was ordained priest, and he devoted himself to serve the holy church. He asked the Lord Christ by day and night to facilitate for him the parting from this world to go to the desert. The Lord Christ answered his request, and he went out from the city and came to Ternot (Mareot) and from there went to the desert. The angel of God appeared to him in the form of a monk who journeyed with him and brought him to the monastery of St. Macarius in Scetis. He came to the holy old men Abba Abraham and Abba George, became their disciple, and remained with them for three years. Then, they took him before the altar and in the presence of the Hegumen Abba John and for three days they prayed over the monastic garb. They then ordained him a monk and dressed him with the holy Scheme. From that hour he exerted himself with many worships, in continuous fasting and prayer and fought a great fight. He slept on the ground until his skin cleaved to his bones. He read continually the biography of Abba Simon the Stylite, and he thought of leading a solitary life. He took counsel with the holy fathers concerning that, and they approved his wish and they prayed for him. He left and came near the city of Sakha, province of Gharbia, where he dwelt in a small church. The believers built a place for him on a pillar, and he went up on it. During his days, a man appeared in whom dwelt an obstinate devil, who led many people astray. He sat in the middle of the church surrounded by people listening to him, carrying tree branches. Abba Agathon sent for the possessed and had him brought to him. He prayed over him and cast out the devil who led the people astray. Similarly, a woman claimed that St. Mīna conversed with her and she commanded the people of her city to dig a well in the name of St. Mīna to heal everyone who bathed in it. St. Agathon prayed down of martyrdom in the kingdom of the heavens. May his prayers be with us over that woman until he cast out from her that unclean spirit and he commanded the people to fill up that well with earth. At the hands of this holy man, St. Agathon, God worked many miracles, of healing sick people and casting out devils. The devils appeared to him in the form of angels, singing sweet songs and imparting blessings unto him, but by the might of the Lord Christ he knew their guile,

he made the sign of the Cross over them, and they fled away defeated. When God wished to repose him from the labours of this world, he fell sick for a short while and delivered up his soul into the hand of God. The people who had benefitted from his sermons and teachings gathered around him and wept bitterly. This holy father lived for 100 years, of which he spent 40 years in the world and 10 years in the desert and 50 years in solitude upon that pillar. *His prayers guard us against all our enemies, and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.*

Only one manuscript of the Menologus of the Gospels (14 Tūt) mentions Agathon the stylite⁷ and in the calendar of Abu Barakat Ibn Kabar (14 Tūt) we find the name of Agathon as saint, (not stylite) (Tisserant, 1913, p 254 [10])⁸ in the calendar of Qalqašandī: feast of Simeon the recluse (Coquin, 1975, pp. 375-411 especially p. 389), but he is not mentioned in the calendar of Ibn al-Rahib, as we find Isaac the recluse (Sidarus, 1975, Tafel 7). Amazingly enough, we find the Syriac calendar commemorates Agathon the stylite (7-8th century) on the 12th of September (Iylū.l) (Akhrass, 2015, p. 135). There are neither relics recorded,⁹ nor inscriptions mentioning his name (Papaconstatinou, 2001, p. 55).

In the liturgical books

This saint is not mentioned in the manuscripts used by Bishop Samuel for his edition of the book the Order of the Church “Tartīb al-Bay‘ah”. This commemoration does not occur in the book of Turūhāt (Burmester, 1938, pp. 141-194 especially p.148). Yassa ‘Abd al-Masih did not find any doxology in the seven manuscripts that he used for his article (Abd al-Masih, 1941, pp. 31-61 especially p. 38), the same could be said for the Ms Paris Copte 123, which is the book of doxologies for the first six months of the year. There is a group of monks who are called the stylites in the Coptic lectionary, this group includes Simeon the Stylite, Agathon, the Stylite, Luke, Barsuma, and Theodore disciple of Pachome, Pachome, Marcian, Simeon the young, Moses the black and Ephrem the Syrian (De Fenoyl, 1960, pp.51-53).

The Manuscript 75 Liturgy Sammanūd

The manuscript contains the doxologies and responses for the first three months i.e. Tūt, Babāh and Hatūr. The numbering is in Coptic Uncial on the verso. The text starts on ff.4 and the last part of the text 168 and the colophon is written by error as f. 199.

The colophon includes several important data; we will give the text in full.

المهتم الابن الحبيب الماهر اللبيب الثابت ايمانه على صخرة اليقين صاحب الصدقات على الفقراء والمقلين المعلم مشرقي ابو كمون الرب الآله
الساکن في اعلا سماء ان يعوض عليه عطاياه غفران خطاياه الواحد ثلثون وستون ومائة في ملكوت السموات ويجعل دياره عمار ويكفيه شر
الظالمين بشفاة العدرى كل حين والملايكة والشهدا والقديسين

7 Nau, 1913, p. 223[59] (Agathon the Stylite), the other manuscripts that did not mention are in the following pages : p. 188[2], p.211[47], p.225[61].

8 Mar Agathon, Saint, Ananias Bishop.

9 We did not find any relics their names should be mentioned in the following pages: Meinardus, 1970, p. 152 (nothing). Meinardus, 1999, p 312 (nothing).

امين

ونافل هذا الكتاب احقر الكهنة يوحنا الناسخ بحارة الروم يسال الابا والاخوة الذي يقرأوا في هذا الكتاب ان يدعوا له بالغفران والمسامحة
*ومن قال شيا فله امثاله عوض الواحد ثلثون وستون ومائة والشكر لله

ⲟⲩⲁⲭⲡ	بسم الله الرووف الرحيم	Ⲫ
ⲁⲃⲃⲁ	وبالله الخلاص امين	ⲁⲪⲁ
ⲓⲱⲁ		Ⲫ
ⲡⲗ		

وقفا موبداً وحبسا مخلدا علي بيعة القديس العظيم ابانوب بناحية سمنود لا يباع ولا يرهن ولا يخرج عن وقفته بوجه من وجوه التلاف
وكملن اخرجه عن وقفته هذه يكون مدان من السيد المسيح دينونة بلا رحمة ويكون صاحب البيعة خصمه والذي يحفظه على وقفه يكون
محالل مبارك وعلى بني الطاعة تحل البركة والشكر لله دايبا والساعي في ذلك ابينا المكرم القمص داوود الراهب خادم هذه البيعة المسيح يعطيه
اجره في ملكوت السموات امين

The sponsor is the beloved son, the clever, intelligent, the established in his faith on the unshakable rock who gives alms to the poor and needy, the master (Mu'allim) Mišriqī Abū Kammūn, may the Lord God dwelling in the Highest Heaven reward his gifts forgiveness of his sins thirty, sixty and one hundred in the heavenly kingdom and will make his houses inhabited and protect his from the evil of the oppressors through the intercessions of the ever Virgin, the Angel, the martyrs and the saints. Amen

The scribe of this book the most humble of the priest, Yūhannā the scribe in Harit al-Rūm demands the fathers and brethren who read in this book to pray for the forgiveness and pardon and who says anything will get the same thirty, sixty and one hundred, thanks be to God.

The *archbishop* Abba John the 107 in the *time* of the *martyrs* 1501 (= 1785AD)¹⁰

In the name of God the compassionate and merciful

The salvation is from God Amen

(This is) an inalienable endowment and eternal bequest for the church of the great saint Abanūb in the district of Sammanūd not to be sold or taken in pledge or taken out of his bequest for any reason of destruction. Whoever will take it out of his bequest will be condemned by Lord Christ condemnation without mercy and the patron saint of this church will be his adversary and whoever will keep it in its bequest will be absolved and blessed. May the sons of the obedience will get the blessing. Thanks be to God forever and who worked for that our honoured father Dawūd the monk the minister of this church, may Christ grant him his wage in the heavenly kingdom Amen!

10 In Coptic

The *History of the Patriarchs* is nearly silent (Khater & Burmester, 1970, p 294 (Translation), p. 169 (text)). The patriarch John XVIII started to establish the patriarchal library in Harit al-Rūm (Atiya, 1991, p. 1206b-1207b; Butler, 1887; pp. 278-284), unfortunately, we do not know the exact location of this library as the present edifices date from the time of Muhammad ‘Ali. (Meinardus, 1977, p. 304-305; 1999, p.196).

The colophon highlights also that the minister of church of Sammanūd is a monk, however we do not know the name of his monastery. It is worth mentioning that the sponsor of this manuscript is a layman. The role of the notables increased especially in the eighteenth century.¹¹

اليوم الرابع عشر من شهر توت نياحة اغاتا العامودي دكصولوجية واطس	The fourteenth day of the month of Tūt Repose of Agathon the Stylite
αφωτημ εθε φβιος+ ητε σιμεων πιστελλιτης ¹² + ηχε παρωμι ηαγαθος+ αββα αγαθα πιστελλιτης	This <i>good</i> man Abba Agathe <i>Stylite</i> heard about the <i>life</i> of Simon the <i>Stylite</i>
παγγελος αφογωνηφ ερωφ+ φα τωρηητ μοφι νεμαφ+ φα αββα αβρααμ νεμ γεωρηη+ αφωπι νωου ¹³ ηογωρηι ηχογ	The <i>angel</i> appeared to him and walked with him to Scetis (Šihīt) to Abba Abraham and George he dwelt with them as a son for a while
μενενα και αφι εβολ+ αφορι ερατφ ηη ηρομηη+ εχεν ογστελλος εφσησ+ αφιρι ηρανηωφ ημηνη	Afterwards, he went out and stood for fifty years on a solid <i>pillar</i> he did great signs
ναφταλο ηογον ηιβεν+ εθηηογ ραροφ εβολ+ ηεν νογωωνη+ αφρηογι ηηηδεμων εβολ+ ηεν τχομ ητε ηχσ	He used to heal everyone coming to him with illness, he casted the <i>demons</i> with the power of <i>Christ</i>
ητεφερφαλιν νεμ ααα+* χε ακωφ εροι ηχε ηεθνος τηροφ+ αλλα ηεν φραν ηησσ πανογφ+ αφσι ηπασιμπωι νεμωου	To <i>sing</i> with David: “All <i>nations</i> surrounded me, <i>but</i> in the name of the Lord, my Lord I fended them off!” ¹⁴
τω πενωτ εθγ ηασκγτης+ αββα αγαθα πιστελλιτης+ ητ ^x	Prayer...our holy father the <i>ascetic</i> one Abba Agathon the <i>Stylite</i> that

Commentary

The first quatrain, the text seems to be written in Arabic αραθα as it should be the Greek vocative αραθε

11 مجدي جرجس، أثر الأرخنة على أوضاع القبط في القرن الثامن عشر [Magdi Girgis, *The influence of the notables on the situations*, p. 9-18.

12 Read στηλλιτης

13 Read νεμωου

14 Ps 117 [118]: 10

The text highlights the main reason that motivated him to become a *Stylite* is the reading of the life of Simon that was translated in Coptic and was published according to the manuscript 61 Vatican Library which dates to the tenth century (Cf. Chaîne, 1948). The quatrain states that an *angel* appeared to him and walked with him to Abba Abraham and George however the expression for a while “*ἄγγελος ἔσθη*” seems to be an Arabic idiom.

The fifth quatrain is taken from the doxology of Saint George, while in the doxology of Saint George is in the context, the use of this doxology is out of context. The text also mentions the duration of the saint on the pillar and the miracles The conclusion is the usual demand for the prayers of the saint. The doxology is another source of information of the life of Agathon the Stylite.

The Difnar¹⁵

This book was first compiled in the Upper-Egypt (Sahidic) (Krause, 2003, p 167-185; Cramer & Krause, 2008, p. 17-21) before the ninth century. The first manuscript that came to our knowledge in Lower-Egypt (Bohairic) dialect is from the monastery of Saint Antony as this is apparent from the colophon of the Manuscript of Saint Antony.

كامل شهر بابه المبارك بمعونة ربنا يسوع المسيح الذي يحق له التمجيد والتسبيح الى اباد الدهور وعلينا رحمته امين

نعجز في اخر شهر كيهك لسنة الف ومائة واحد للشهداء الاطهار بدير القديس العظيم ابنا انطونيوس بيرية العربية ربنا يسوع المسيح يصنع
رحمة مع المتهم والقاني والقاري والمسكين ناقله بصلواته امين

The month of the blessed month of Bābah is finished –with the help of our Lord Jesus Christ- to him is the glorification and praise for ever Amen- May his mercy be upon us Amen!

It was accomplished on the last day of Kīhak of the year 1101 of the pure martyrs (= 26 December 1384AD) in the monastery of Antony in the desert of Arabah. May our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon the sponsor, the owner, the reader and the poor scribe, through his prayers, Amen!

All the other existing copies -containing the full Coptic text- are mainly taken from this manuscript (Mekhaïel, 2010, p. 34-58).

	اليوم الرابع عشر من شهر توت تنيح القديس اغاثا العمودي من تنيس طرح بلحن ادام	The 14 th day of the month Tūt, the repose of saint Agathon the Stylite from Tannīs
α πεκραν ετσμαρωυτ+ αγαθε πιστελλιτης+ αφερωυωι εμαω+ ηεν νιαρετη	اسمك المبارك يا ابنا اغاثا العمودي اضي بالاكثر في الفضائل	Your blessed name Athagon the <i>stylite</i> extremely shines by the <i>virtues</i>

15 For this book cf. Gabra, 1996, p. 37-52; 1998, p. 48-69.

<p>ΠΑΙΡΩΜΙ ΝΔΙΚΕΟΣ+ ΝΕ ΟΥΕΒΟΛ ΠΕ+ ΉΕΝ ΟΥΙ ΝΗΠΟΛΙΣ+ ΕΠΕΣΡΑΝ ΠΕ ΘΕΝΗΙΣ</p>	<p>هذا الرجل الثابت كان من اهل بلد تدعى تنييس</p>	<p>This <i>just</i> man was from one of the <i>cities</i> which its name is Tannīs</p>
<p>ΕΡΕ ΝΕΥΙΟΤ ΔΕ+ ΖΑΝΡΩΜΙ ΝΘΜΗ ΝΕ+ ΟΥΟΖ ΝΔΙΚΕΟΣ ΝΠΕΜΘΟ ΝΦΤ</p>	<p>وكانوا ابهاته اناس ابرار وصديقين امام الله</p>	<p>His parents were righteous and <i>just</i> people in front of God</p>
<p>Ο ΥΟΖ ΝΑΡΕ ΦΜΕΥΙ+ ΝΤΜΕΤΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ+ Ι ΕΧΕΝ ΠΕΥΖΗΤ+ ΉΕΝ ΟΥΜΟΥΝ ΕΒΟΛ</p>	<p>وكان فكر الرهبة يصعد على قلبه بغير فتور</p>	<p>And the thought of <i>monasticism</i> came always¹⁶ to his mind¹⁷</p>
<p>ΑΦΟΥΩΝΖ ΝΑΦ ΕΒΟΛ+ ΝΧΕ ΟΥΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ+ ΑΦΕΙΤΥ ΤΑ ΤΥΖΗΤ+ ΖΟΣ ΟΥΜΟΝΧΟΣ</p>	<p>فظهر له ملاك صحبه الى شيهات في شبه راهب</p>	<p>An <i>angel</i> appeared to him and took him¹⁸ to Scetis as a <i>monk</i></p>
<p>ΑΦΙ ΤΑ ΝΉΕΛΛΟΙ+ ΑΒΡΑΑΜ ΝΕΜ ΓΕΩΡΓΗ+ ΑΦΤ¹⁹ ΕΧΩΦ ΝΠΙΣΧΗΜΑ+ ΑΦΩΠΙ ΝΩΟΥ ΝΩΗΡΙ</p>	<p>فاتي الى الشيوخ ابرام وجرجة والبسوه الاسكيم وصار ابناً لهم</p>	<p>He came to the elders Abraham and George and they clothed him with the <i>schema</i>, and he became a son to them</p>
<p>ΑΦΤ ΝΤΕΥΥΧΗ+ ΉΕΝ ΖΑΝΑΚΥΚΙΣ+ ΝΕΜ ΖΑΝΠΡΟΕΥΧΗ+ ΝΑΤΒΙΗΠΙ ΝΜΩΟΥ</p>	<p>ودفع نفسه في نسكيات وصلوات لا تحصى</p>	<p>He gave his <i>soul</i> in <i>ascetic</i> (<i>practices</i>) and countless <i>prayers</i></p>
<p>ΝΑΦΕΡΜΕΛΕΤΑΝ+ ΉΕΝ ΝΙΑΡΕΤΗ+ ΝΤΕ ΠΕΝΙΩΤ ΕΘΥ+ ΣΙΜΕΩΝ ΠΙΤΕΛΛΙΤΗΣ</p>	<p>وكان يقرى في فضائل ايينا القديس سمعان العمودي</p>	<p>He used to <i>meditate</i>²⁰ in the <i>virtues</i> of our holy father Simeon the <i>Stylite</i></p>
<p>ΝΑΦΕΡΕΠΙΘΥΜΙΝ+ ΕΠΕΥΒΙΟΣ ΝΜΗ+ ΑΦΙ ΕΝΙΘΩΥ ΝΤΠΟΛΙΣ ΣΑΧΑ</p>	<p>ويشتاق الى سيرته الحقيقية فنزل الى نواحي مدينة سخا</p>	<p>He <i>desired eagerly</i> his true <i>life</i> he went to the borders of the <i>city</i> of Sakha</p>
<p>Α ΝΙΠΙΣΤΟΣ ΚΩΤ ΝΑΦ+ ΝΜΑΥ ΝΟΥΣΤΥΛΛΟΣ+ ΑΦΩΕ ΖΡΗΙ ΕΧΩΦ ΝΝ ΝΡΟΜΠΙ</p>	<p>وان المومنون بنوا له عموداً فصعد عليه مرة خمسون سنة</p>	<p>The <i>faithful</i> built to him there a <i>pillar</i> he went up for fifty years</p>
<p>ΑΦΙΡΙ ΝΖΑΝΧΟΜ+ ΝΑΤΒΙΗΠΙ ΝΜΩΟΥ+ ΟΥΟΖ ΝΛΕΜΩΝ+ ΑΦΖΙΤΟΥ ΕΒΟΛ</p>	<p>وصنع قوات لا يحصون واخرج شياطين كثيرة</p>	<p>He did countless miracles and he casted the <i>demons</i>²¹ out</p>

16 Arabic “without ceasing.”

17 Lit. “his heart”

18 Arabic “accompanied”

19 Read αϣτ

20 Arabic “read”

21 Arabic “+many.”

εταρχωκ εβολ+ ἡναῖρισι τηρογ+ αϣῆτον ἡμοϣ+ αϣϣεναϣ ρα πῶς	ولما اكمل هذه الجهادات والاعتاب أتنيح وذهب الى الرب	He completed all these pains ²² and reposed and went to the Lord
ϣιτεν νιεγχι	... بصلوات	Through the <i>prayers</i>

Commentary

The quatrain is an introductory text praising the virtues of the saint. The second quatrain highlights the origin of the Saint from Tinnis (1992, p. 2686-2694). The following quatrain are parallel to the text of the Synaxarium. The names of Abraham and George are “the last great saints”, of Scetis in the seventh century (Coquin, 1991, pp. 12a-13a; Evelyn-White, 1932, pp. 278-80). It is important to mention that this saint lived in Lower-Egypt around the sixth-seventh century which means that it was around the time of important events such as the usurper of Phocas, the Persian invasion, the Byzantine reconquest, and the Arabic conquest (Fraser, 1991, p. 183b-189b). However no mention of any of these events in biography of this saint. The *city* of Sakha it is worth mentioning that the spelling of the name of the city is not attested elsewhere (Timm, 1992, p. 2231-2237), it seems that it was taken from the Arabic text.

The text briefly mentions the miracles without giving details. Hence, we can say that the text of the Difnar here is relying on the Synaxarion for the following reasons:

- The spelling of the city Sakha is taken from Arabic.
- The same could be said for the spelling of city Tannīs.
- The biographical data are taken from the synaxarion without adding anything.

ἡθοϣ ον ηχοϣ βατοϣ	وله ايضا طرح واطس	To him also <i>tune Batos</i>
ησαναϣ πιπροφητηϣ+ ερχωρεγιν εϣχω ημοϣ+ χε ηηετκωτ ἡσα πῶς+ σεναϣιβτ ἕεν τογχοη	اشعيا النبي يسبح قايلًا ان الذين يطلبون الرب يبدل لهم القوة	Isaiah the <i>prophet sings</i> saying: “Those who wait for the Lord shall change their strength.” ²³
πινιωτ ἡδικεοϣ+ αββα αγραθε πιστελλιτηϣ+ αϣχωκ εβολ ερηη εχωϣ+ ἡχε παισαχι μπροφητικον	هذا الصديق العظيم انا اغاثا العمودي قد كمل عليه هذا القول النبوي	The great <i>righteous</i> Abba Agathon the <i>stylite</i> accomplished upon him this <i>prophetic</i> statement

22 Arabic + “fighting, struggling”

23 Is. 40: 31.

<p>πινιωτ̄ αββα αγραθε̄+ αqφαῑ β̄α πικ̄ρ̄ε̄ ε̄θ̄ῡ+ η̄τε̄ π̄κ̄ς̄ β̄εν̄ ο̄ῡμε̄τ̄χ̄ω̄ρῑ + νε̄μ ο̄ῡνιωτ̄ η̄ε̄γ̄πο̄μο̄νη̄</p>	<p>العظيم انبا اغاثا حمل الصليب المقدس الذي المسيح بقوة وصبر عظيم</p>	<p>The great abba Agathon carried the holy <i>Cross</i> of <i>Christ</i> with mighty and great <i>endurance</i></p>
<p>ε̄ρε̄ ῑε̄ρε̄μ̄ιᾱς̄ πῑπρο̄φη̄της̄+ χ̄ω̄ η̄π̄τ̄ᾱιο̄ φ̄η̄ε̄θ̄ῡ+ νε̄μ̄ τε̄ρ̄ν̄ιω̄τ̄ η̄ε̄γ̄πο̄μο̄νη̄+ νε̄μ̄ πε̄ρᾱμο̄ν̄ῑ η̄το̄τ̄ῡ</p>	<p>ان ارميا النبي يقص كرامة هذا القديس وعظم صبره وعظم تحفظه وطول اناته</p>	<p>Jeremiah the <i>prophet</i> said about the honour of the saint and his great <i>endurance</i> and his possession</p>
<p>Χ̄ε̄ ω̄ο̄ῡνιᾱτ̄ῡ η̄π̄ρω̄μῑ+ φ̄η̄ε̄θη̄νᾱφ̄αῑ β̄ᾱ πε̄ρ̄νᾱρ̄β̄ε̄ῡ+ ο̄ῡο̄ρ̄ η̄τε̄ρ̄τ̄ᾱλο̄ῡ ε̄ρο̄ῡ+ ῑς̄χ̄εν̄ π̄σ̄χο̄ῡ η̄τε̄ρ̄με̄τᾱλο̄ῡ</p>	<p>اذ قال طوبيا للرجل الذي يحمل عليه نيره على عاتقه منذ زمان</p>	<p>Saying: “Blessed is the man when he bears his yoke and carries it to him since the time of his youth.”²⁴</p>
<p>ᾱκ̄τ̄ ρ̄ῑω̄τ̄κ̄ η̄τ̄η̄ε̄λλ̄ῑβ̄ω̄+ η̄τε̄ τ̄δ̄ικ̄ε̄ο̄ς̄ῡνη̄+ νε̄μ̄ πῑθ̄ω̄ο̄ῡῑ ε̄νε̄κ̄β̄ᾱλᾱῡχ̄+ β̄εν̄ π̄σ̄ο̄β̄τ̄ η̄π̄ῑε̄ᾱγγ̄ε̄λῑο̄ν̄</p>	<p>حدثته قد لبست درع البر وانعلت قدميك بعده الانجيل</p>	<p>You wore on the breastplate of <i>righteousness</i>; and your feet shod with the preparation of the <i>Gospel</i>.²⁵</p>
<p>ᾱκ̄με̄ν̄ρε̄ ε̄ω̄ω̄πῑ ρ̄ῑ π̄ω̄ᾱφ̄ε̄+ ω̄ π̄ιν̄ιω̄τ̄ ᾱβ̄βᾱ ᾱγ̄ρᾱθε̄+ φ̄ρᾱτε̄κ̄ω̄πῑ η̄δ̄ο̄κ̄ῑμο̄ς̄+ ε̄π̄χ̄ῑν̄τ̄ ο̄ῡβε̄ η̄π̄π̄νᾱ</p>	<p>احببت ان تكون ساكنا في البرية ايها العظيم انبا اغاثا حتى تكون مجربا بمقاتلة الارواح</p>	<p>You loved to dwell in the desert, O great Abba Agathon in order to be <i>tempted</i> in the fight of the <i>Spirit</i>.</p>
<p>ο̄ῡο̄ρ̄ ο̄ν̄ νᾱκ̄ρε̄τ̄τε̄ν̄ε̄ρ̄+ η̄φ̄ρη̄τ̄ η̄ν̄ιᾱβ̄ω̄μ̄+ ε̄κε̄σο̄χῑ η̄νε̄κ̄η̄ῑσῑ+ ε̄κε̄μο̄ῡ η̄νε̄κ̄ε̄ο̄</p>	<p>وانبتت لك اجنحة مثل النسور اذا تسعى ولا تتعب وتمشي ولا تعطش</p>	<p>And also wings grew like eagles, you hastened, and you did not tire and you walked and you did not become hungry²⁶</p>
<p>ω̄ π̄ιν̄ιω̄τ̄ ᾱβ̄βᾱ ᾱγ̄ρᾱθε̄+ ᾱκ̄χο̄ρ̄ ε̄π̄ῶ̄ς̄ σᾱβᾱω̄θ̄+ ο̄ῡο̄ρ̄ ᾱκ̄μο̄ῡ β̄εν̄ π̄ῑπ̄νᾱ+ νε̄μ̄ τ̄χ̄ο̄μ̄ η̄τε̄ η̄λ̄ιᾱς̄</p>	<p>ايها العظيم انبا اغاثا فاغترت للرب الصابااوت وسعيت بالروح وبقوة ايليا</p>	<p>O great Abba Agathon, you became zealot for the Lord <i>of Hosts</i> and you walked in the <i>Spirit</i> and the power of <i>Elijah</i></p>
<p>νᾱκε̄ρ̄ψ̄ᾱλ̄ῑν̄ νε̄μ̄ δ̄ᾱγ̄ῑδ̄+ χ̄ε̄ ᾱγ̄κ̄ω̄τ̄ ε̄ρο̄ῑ+ η̄χ̄ε̄ η̄νε̄θ̄νο̄ς̄²⁷ τη̄ρο̄ῡ+ β̄εν̄ φ̄ρᾱν̄ η̄π̄ῶ̄ς̄ πᾱνο̄ῡτ̄+ ᾱῑβ̄ῑ η̄πᾱβ̄ῑ η̄π̄ω̄ιω̄ νε̄μ̄ω̄ῡ</p>	<p>ومكث ترتل مع داوود قابلاً احاطت بي جميع الامم وباسم الرب الالهي انتقمتم منهم</p>	<p>You used to <i>sing</i> with David: “All <i>nations</i> surrounded me, in the name of the Lord, my Lord I fended them off!”²⁸</p>

24 Lamentations 3:7.
25 phessians 6:14-15.
26 Arabic “thirsty.”
27 Read η̄νε̄θ̄νο̄ς̄
28 Ps 117 [118]: 10

САТОТК ΔΚΩΤΕΜ ΔΕ ΔΕΜΝΟΜ†* Ω ΠΑΜΕΝΡΙΤ ΔΓΑΘΕ* ΔΕ ΔΝΟΚ ΓΑΡ †ΧΗ ΝΕΜΔΚ* ΟΥΟΖ †ΝΔΥ ΕΠΕΚΑΓΩΝ	وللوقت سمعت تقوي يا حبيبي اغاثا لاني كايں معك وانا ناظر الى جهادك	Immediately you heard: “console O my beloved Agathon <i>for</i> I am with you and I see your <i>fight</i> .”
ΤΩΒΖ ἩΠΩΣ ΕΖΡΗΙ ΕΧΩΝ...	اطلب من الرب	Pray to the Lord on our behalf...

Commentary

The psali Batos does not provide biographical data about Agathon of Scetis. The author of this text has excellent knowledge of Scriptures mentioning verses from the Old and the New Testaments. The text could apply to any hermit or monk, we do not find any anthroponym or toponym. While the Psali Adam provides us with much information about his origin, his two masters Abraham and George in Scetis, his withdrawal to Sakha, etc.

Conclusion

In this article, we highlighted the importance of the city of Sakha (Stewart, 1991, p. 2087b-2088a), in the book of *history of the Patriarchs*, the book of the *Churches and Monasteries* (twelfth century). This saint lived in Lower-Egypt around the sixth-seventh century which means that he was contemporary to important events such as the usurper of Phocas, the Persian invasion, the Byzantine reconquest, and the Arabic conquest, but neither his biography nor the liturgical texts reflect any hints of these events. We found two sets of the liturgical texts are additional sources of information to our knowledge about Agathon the Stylite. A doxology Batos rarely attested in many manuscripts. Texts of the Antiphonarium (Difnar). These texts do not add much about the biographical data; however they show the interest and the veneration of this saint. Interestingly, while the pillar of Simeon the Stylite was remembered and venerated for long (Maraval, 1985, pp. 342-345) time, the pillar of Agathon is not mentioned anywhere, even his relics are not found. The church is considered as one of the places visited by the holy family.²⁹

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29 Hulsman, 2002, p.50-52. A. et B. Sadek, 2017, p.136-140. However these traces should be that of Severus of Antioch cf. Youssef, 2001, p. 71-76.

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مجدي جرجس، أثر الأرخنة على أوضاع القبط في القرن الثامن عشر،

[Magdi Girgis, *The influence of the notables on the situations*]



Ms 75 Liturgy Sammanud fol. 34.



Coptic Museum, Ms 357 Liturgy fol. 40v