



Original paper



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Patriarch Athanasius III of Alexandria's Arabic Encyclical Epistle (ca. 1300 AD)

Abstract


The article presents, for the first time, an Arabic encyclical epistle by the Melkite Orthodox patriarch of Alexandria Athanasius III (sed. ca. 1275 — ca. 1315), written during his exile in Constantinople. It is preserved in the unicum 14th century manuscript Sinai ar. 451 and is addressed to Athanasius III's *locum tenens* archbishop Peter (otherwise unknown). In this epistle, Patriarch Athanasius shares his views on the proper order of church life and seeks to correct certain problematic practices that had become widespread among Orthodox Christians in Egypt. Patriarch Athanasius' recommendations include the following: the liturgy is to be celebrated at the third hour (9am in modern time-reckoning), the antidoron should be handled in a proper fashion, hot water must be added into the chalice towards the end of the liturgy, it is forbidden to rent candles for use at the church or to use oil from the church lamps for worldly purposes, and some others. The epistle sheds light on both day-to-day life and liturgical practices of the Egyptian Melkites, on the progressive Byzantinization of their church services, and on their struggles under Mamlūk rule; it adds important details to the portrait of this outstanding Alexandrian hierarch. If earlier we knew him only as a church official of the era of Emperors Michael VIII and Andronicus II Palaiologos, as the author of an epistle to the Russian Church, and as a bibliophile, the epistle published herein allows us to see him as a pastor caring for his flock. The article includes a critical edition and English translation of this important treatise.

Keywords:

Athanasius III of Alexandria, Patriarchate of Alexandria, Patriarchate of Constantinople, Mamlūks, Typikon, Arab Christian Literature

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Iwould like to begin this article, dedicated to the memory of the outstanding scholar of Middle Eastern Christianity and a true “passionarian of Eastern Christian studies”, my friend Constantin Panchenko, with his own words: “The world of Arab Christian manuscripts, fortunately for scholars, continues to conceal unknown names and texts”¹. Indeed, the deeper we delve into the study of Arab Christian manuscripts, the more documents we encounter that remain entirely unknown to scholarship, yet are of considerable importance — documents that challenge established interpretations of past events and key historical figures. To uncover and publish such texts is both our scholarly duty and an incomparable joy². Presented here is yet

¹ Панченко К.А. Review of: Treiger A. Unpublished Texts from the Arab Orthodox Tradition (1) // Вестник ПСТГУ. Сер. III: Филология. 2014. Вып. 5 (40). P. 191–198, esp. P. 191. On the works of С.А. Panchenko, see: Меликян С.А., Трейгер А., свящ. Пассионарий восточно-христианских исследований: Памяти Константина Александровича Панченко (1968–2024) // Вестник ПСТГУ. Сер. III: Филология. 2024. Вып. 4 (81). P. 9–22.

² See the series of articles: Treiger A. Unpublished Texts from the Arab Orthodox Tradition (1): On the Origins of the Term “Melkite” and On the Destruction of the Maryamiyya Cathedral in Damascus // *Chronos*. 2014. Vol. 29. P. 7–37; Treiger A. Unpublished Texts from the Arab Orthodox Tradition (2): Miracles of St. Eustratius of Mar Saba (written ca. 860) // *Chronos*. 2016. Vol. 33. P. 7–20; Treiger A. Unpublished Texts from the Arab Orthodox Tradition (3): The Paterikon of the

another newly discovered text: an Arabic circular letter by Athanasius III, the Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria (patriarch ca. 1275–ca. 1315)³.

It is well known that upon coming to power in the mid-13th century, the Mamluk dynasty initiated large-scale persecutions of Christians⁴. To avoid the worst, Athanasius III of Alexandria went into exile and spent most of his tenure as patriarch (1275/6–1305, with a brief interruption) in Constantinople. It is likely that the letter published herein was composed there, in the capital of the Byzantine Empire. It is addressed to Archbishop Peter, the *locum tenens* of the Patriar-

Palestinian Lavra of Mar Chariton // Chronos. 2018. Vol. 38. P. 7–46; Treiger A. Unpublished Texts from the Arab Orthodox Tradition (4): Canonical Responses of the Patriarch Mark III of Alexandria to the Abbot George of Damietta // Chronos. 2020. Vol. 41. P. 1–35; Russian version of the last of these articles: Трейгер А., свящ. Послание патриарха Александрийского Марка III игумену Георгию Дамиееттскому // Библия и христианская древность. 2021. № 1 (9). P. 26–69. In addition to the review of the first article in the series (see previous note), С.А. Panchenko also wrote a review of the second and third articles: Панченко К.А. Рец. на: Treiger A. Unpublished Texts from the Arab Orthodox Tradition (2) и (3) // Вестник ПСТГУ. Сер. III: Филология. 2019. Вып. 4 (61). P. 145–153.

³ On this patriarch (called Athanasius II in some publications), see: Лебедев А.П. Исторические очерки состояния Византийско-восточной церкви от конца XI до середины XV века: От начала Крестовых походов до падения Константинополя в 1453 г. СПб., 1998. P. 273–275; Попов И. Н. Афанасий III (II) Синаит // Православная энциклопедия. Т. 4. М., 2002. P. 50 (<https://www.pravenc.ru/text/76950.html>); Панченко К.А. Восточные патриархаты и Константинополь от крестоносцев до османов // Понятие первенства: Истоки и контексты: Коллективная монография / Ред. свящ. П.В. Ермилов, М.В. Грацианский. М., 2022. P. 491–538, esp. P. 503–505, 511; Failler A. Le séjour d'Athanase II d'Alexandrie à Constantinople // Revue des études byzantines. 1977. Т. 35. P. 43–71; McKendrick S. The Codex Alexandrinus or the Dangers of Being a Named Manuscript // The Bible as Book: The Transmission of the Greek Text / Ed. S. McKendrick, O. A. O'Sullivan. London, 2003. P. 1–16, Fig. 1–5 (between P. 100–101).

⁴ On the persecutions of Christians in the early Mamluk period, see: Панченко К.А. Ближневосточное Православие под османским владычеством: Первые три столетия (1516–1831). М., 2012. P. 72–75; Панченко К. А. Будус аль-Хабис, коптский новомученик XIII в.: судьба на фоне эпохи // Вестник ПСТГУ. Сер. III: Филология. 2015. Вып. 5 (45). P. 61–69; Панченко К. А. Поджог Каира 1321 г. и проблема христианского терроризма в Мамлюкском государстве // Вестник ПСТГУ. Сер. III: Филология. 2011. Вып. 4 (26). P. 96–124. The situation became even more acute after the Alexandrian Crusade of 1365; see: Панченко К. А. Забытая катастрофа: К реконструкции последствий Александрийского крестового похода 1365 г. на Христианском Востоке // Арабы-христиане в истории и литературе Ближнего Востока. М., 2013. P. 202–219.



Patriarch Athanasius III's autograph note in Greek and Arabic
Vat. Ott. gr. 452, fol. 1r.
https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Ott.gr.452

chal Residence (*nā'ib al-qillāya al-baṭrakiyya*), i.e., in modern terms, the acting patriarch during Athanasius's absence. Through him, the patriarch addresses all hierarchs and faithful of the Patriarchate of Alexandria.

What is the significance of this document? In academic literature, it has long been assumed that Athanasius III showed little concern for the affairs of his flock. For example, the famous Russian Byzantinist Alexey Lebedev (1845–1908) gave him a rather unflattering characterization: “Athanasius of Alexandria represents a curious type: for a long time, he was considered to be Patriarch of Alexandria, yet he had no knowledge of the affairs of the Alexandrian Church. It must be assumed that such patriarchs often occupied the See of Alexandria, as residing in the capital [Constantinople]—especially without any particular responsibilities—was greatly favored by provincial hierarchs of that time”⁵.

Athanasius III's letter published herein allows us to correct this mistaken view. Patriarch Athanasius undoubtedly cared for his flock;

⁵ Лебедев А. П. Исторические очерки состояния Византийско-восточной церкви. Р. 275.

he maintained correspondence with the bishops under his authority (this letter is likely to be only a small surviving part of a broader correspondence) and strove, as much as possible, to govern the Patriarchate of Alexandria from the capital. As evident from the content of the missive, he was deeply concerned about the hardships that had befallen his flock—hardships that were, it seems, regularly reported to him from Egypt. The Mamluk persecutions were interpreted by him as manifestations of divine wrath, which, in his view, could only be averted by a return to correct faith and, most importantly, strict observance of church canons.

In his understanding of canonical norms, Athanasius III was guided by the Alexandrian liturgical tradition, though he sought to align it with Constantinopolitan practice. At that time, the Orthodox of Egypt still celebrated the Liturgy of St. Mark, distinct from the Liturgies of St. Basil the Great and St. John Chrysostom used in Constantinople. Nevertheless, as we will see, Athanasius insists on the need to pour hot water into the chalice during the final part of the liturgy—i.e., on the addition of the “warmth” (Gr. ζέον) after the exclamation “The Holy Things for the Holy” and the breaking of the Lamb—an element likely more characteristic of the Constantinopolitan rite and not deeply rooted in Alexandria. In this respect, Athanasius’ letter constitutes another stage in the “Byzantinization” of Near Eastern Orthodox liturgical practice. As is well known, this process unfolded from the 10th to the 14th centuries and was at its slowest in the Patriarchate of Alexandria, due to its geographical remoteness from Byzantium and from the more heavily Byzantinized regions of Syria and Palestine⁶. Together with the writings of other Alexandrian primates—especially Patriarch Mark III (patriarch ca. 1180–ca. 1209), who visited Constantinople in 1195—the letter of Athanasius III allows us to reconstruct the main stages of this process among the Melkites of Egypt⁷.

⁶ See: *Galadza D.* Liturgy and Byzantinization in Jerusalem. Oxford, 2018.

⁷ On Mark III of Alexandria, see: *Treiger A.* Unpublished Texts from the Arab Orthodox Tradition (4): Canonical Responses of the Patriarch Mark III of Alexandria; *Панченко К.А.* Восточные патриархаты и Константинополь. Р. 494–495; see also the responses of Theodore Balsamon to the questions of Mark of Alexandria: *Theo-*



Candles at the Annunciation Cathedral in Alexandria (photo taken in 2019)
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Благовещенский_кафедральный_собор_в_Александрии._Свечи.jpg

The letter has survived in a single 14th-century manuscript, Sinai ar. 451, folios 34r–36v⁸. The title of the text aptly reflects its content: *Copy of the epistle received from Father Athanasius, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria, for the entire See of St. Mark, Egypt, and Alexandria, wherein he exhorts them to preserve the ordinances contained therein*. The formula “copy of the letter” (*nushat kitāb*) indicates that this is not an autograph by Athanasius III, but rather a copy made by an unknown scribe, likely directly from the now-lost original, which at that time was kept in the chancellery of the Patriarchate of Alexandria.

The letter contains a preface, seven sections (*fuṣūl*), and a conclusion. In the preface, as already noted, the Patriarch addresses his deputy, Archbishop Peter. Athanasius also explains the purpose of the letter: “*correction and rectification*” (*al-iṣlāḥ wa-t-tahrīr*) of certain

dorus Balsamon. *Interrogationes canonicae sanctissimi patriarchae Alexandriae domini Marci et responsa ad eas sanctissimi patriarchae Antiochiae domini Theodori Balsamonis* // PG. T. 119. Col. 1031–1092 (= PG. T. 138. Col. 951–1012); *Viscuso P.D.* *Guide for a Church Under Islām: The Sixty-six Canonical Questions Attributed to Theodōros Balsamōn*. Brookline (Mass.), 2014.

⁸ Manuscript available in open access: <https://sinaimanuscripts.library.ucla.edu/catalog/ark:%2F21198%2Fz1k94bwk>. On fol. 15r — a colophon dating the manuscript (part of it) to December 10, 6831 from the creation of the world, i.e., 1322 CE. Below the colophon there is a signature of Euthymius, Metropolitan of Nablus, apparently the manuscript’s owner, in both Greek and Arabic.

customs that had taken root in the Patriarchate of Alexandria⁹. He considers these customs to be “harmful” (*dārra*), believing that they have provoked divine wrath upon the Orthodox Christians of Egypt. In advocating for their rectification, Athanasius references information received from certain “zealots of piety” (literally, “men of rectification”, *aṣḥāb at-tahrīr* / *dawī at-tahrīr*), most likely Byzantine canonists with whom the patriarch, like his predecessor Mark III, had consulted in Constantinople. On their advice, Athanasius urges the Alexandrian faithful to observe the “necessary order” (*an-nizām al-wāğīb*) in their church life.

The letter’s seven main prescriptions are as follows:

1. The liturgy must be celebrated only at the third hour of the day (i.e., 9 a.m. according to modern reckoning), neither earlier nor later¹⁰;

2. The two prosphora used in the liturgy (it is not the Eucharist but the *antidoron* that it is meant here) must not be taken outside the church, lest they fall into the hands of “external [*non-Christian*] nations and others” — i.e., Muslims, Jews, as well as non-Orthodox Christians (such as the Copts). They are to be consumed within the church. If the priest cannot consume them, they should be given to a child or an elderly woman to consume;

3. Hot water must be added to the Holy Gifts—as already noted, this refers to the addition of ζέον into the chalice during the final section of the liturgy¹¹;

4. Only one priest and one deacon may serve at the same liturgy. Athanasius thus prohibits concelebration of multiple clergy

⁹ It is important to note that the term *tahrīr* in this context should be understood as “rectification” (not “liberation”).

¹⁰ Mark III of Alexandria also prescribes celebrating the liturgy at the third hour (=9 a.m.) and absolutely no later than the sixth hour (=noon), because “the Holy Gifts must be consumed no later than this [i.e., the sixth] hour” — see: *Treiger A. Unpublished Texts from the Arab Orthodox Tradition (4): Canonical Responses of the Patriarch Mark III of Alexandria. Chapter 3. §6. P. 15, 22–23.*

¹¹ The same topic is addressed by Mark III of Alexandria in the 19th (according to *Patrologia Graeca*: 18th) question to Theodore Balsamon; see: *Viscuso P.D. Guide for a Church Under Islām. P. 89–90.* On the history of the “warmth” (ζέον), see: *Taft R. F. A History of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. Volume V: The Precommunion Rites. Rome, 2000. P. 441–502.*



Pouring warmth into the chalice in modern liturgical practice
<https://azbyka.ru/teplota>

at a single liturgy, likely because he considers it to be “wasteful” (if two priests are able to serve two liturgies in different churches, why serve one and the same liturgy together?);

5. The oil in church lamps is a “sacrifice to the Lord”. The lamp must burn out, and its oil cannot be reused for other purposes;

6. Rented candles cannot be used in church, and candles lit within the church are likewise a “sacrifice to the Lord” and may not be reused elsewhere;

7. Wednesdays and Fridays throughout the year are fast days, even if they coincide with major feasts (e.g., the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul on June 29 and the Dormition of the Theotokos on August 15)¹². Like his predecessor Mark III, Athanasius allows only two fast-free weeks: the Bright Week (Pascha week) and the week following Pentecost¹³.

In the conclusion of the letter, Athanasius once more exhorts the faithful to observe these rules “*throughout the entire See of St. Mark*” (*al-kursī al-marquṣī*) and regards their observance as a necessary condition for the Lord’s protection for Egypt’s Orthodox Christians, “so that the Lord may preserve you from every misfortune, grant you His divine blessings, and keep you by the watchful care of His sleepless eye”.

¹² All the dates are indicated according to the Julian calendar.

¹³ See: Treiger A. Unpublished Texts from the Arab Orthodox Tradition (4): Canonical Responses of the Patriarch Mark III of Alexandria. Chapter 5. §12. P. 16, 24–25 (cf.: introduction, P. 8).

The final line of the letter presents some difficulty. A key term in the manuscript, written as *عل سي*, is here interpreted as *علامتي* - ‘*alāmati*, “my ‘*alāma*”. The term ‘*alāma* refers to an ornamental pious formula used by a ruler or high official (whether secular or ecclesiastical, as in our case) as a personal emblem or signature used to authenticate a document¹⁴. Athanasius’s chosen ‘*alāma* is the word “Amen”, which is reproduced by the scribe on the left side of the final line.

The Arabic encyclical of Patriarch Athanasius III adds valuable evidence to the portrait of this prominent church leader. Previously, we knew him primarily as a church diplomat during the reigns of Emperors Michael VIII and Andronikos II Palaiologos — adept at navigating between supporters and opponents of the Union of Lyons¹⁵; as the author of a letter to the Russian Church on the occasion of Metropolitan Maximus’s (metropolitan 1283–1305) election to the See of Kiev¹⁶, and as a bibliophile, thanks to whom the Patriarchate of Alexandria’s library was enriched with significant manuscripts, including the famous *Codex Alexandrinus* (a 5th-century Greek Bible)¹⁷. The

¹⁴ See: *Смирнов А.В. Логико-смысловые основания арабо-мусульманской культуры: семиотика и изобразительное искусство. М., 2005. P. 60. Note 1: “The word ‘*alāma* denoted the ruler’s signature on official documents, and some Arab states had a special office for an official who wrote such an ‘*alāma*. This term conveys the same idea of individual distinction, as the ‘*alāma*-signature served as the ruler’s personal mark”. See also: *Shawe-Taylor E. Document of the Month 1/25: An Early Calligraphic Signature. Nishān, ‘Alāma, or Ṭuḡhrā: A Case Study from the Firuzkuh Papers (22.01.2025) // https://invisibleeast.web.ox.ac.uk/article/document-of-the-month-1/25-nishan-alama-or-ughra-a-case-study-from-the-0.**

¹⁵ *Лебедев А.П. Исторические очерки состояния Византийско-восточной церкви. P. 273–275; Failler A. Le séjour d’Athanasie II d’Alexandrie à Constantinople. The letter against the Latins attributed to Athanasius III most likely does not belong to him; see: Laurent V, Darrouzès J. Dossier grec de l’Union de Lyon (1273–1277). Paris, 1976. P. 41–45, 336–345; Failler A. Le séjour d’Athanasie II d’Alexandrie à Constantinople. P. 46, 56.*

¹⁶ Edition and French translation: *Failler A. Le séjour d’Athanasie II d’Alexandrie à Constantinople. P. 58–63. St. Maximus of Kiev is venerated among the saints (feast days: December 6 and June 23).*

¹⁷ In the 17th century, it was taken to Constantinople by Cyril Lucaris (Patriarch of Alexandria: 1601–1620; Patriarch of Constantinople: 1620–1638, intermittently) and presented to King Charles I of England; it is now in London: London, British Library, Royal MS 1. D. V–VIII. On Athanasius III’s role in acquiring this manuscript, see: *McKendrick S. The Codex Alexandrinus. However, this view has now been challenged by*

letter published here allows us to see him as an archpastor who cared deeply for his flock.

The text of Athanasius III's letter is presented below in the original Arabic, accompanied by an English translation.

| In the Name of God, the Living and Pre-Eternal | (١٣٤) بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الْحَيِّ الْأَزَلِيِّ |
|--|---|
| <p>A copy of the epistle received from Father Athanasius, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria, for the entire See of Saint Mark, Egypt, and Alexandria, wherein he exhorts them to preserve the ordinances contained therein.</p> | <p>نسخة كتاب ورد من الاب اثناسيوس بابا وبطريك الاسكندرية الى ساير التوربه¹⁸ (؟) المرقصية ومصر والاسكندرية يحضهم على حفظ¹⁹ ما فيها من وصايا مضمونة</p> |
| <p>Let it be known to the beloved brother, the lord Archbishop Kyr Peter, <i>locum tenens</i> of the Patriarchal Residence (<i>nā'ib al-qillāya al-baṭraḳiyya</i>), and to the rest of the hierarchs and priests of the See of Saint Mark (<i>al-kursī al-marquṣī</i>)—may the Lord preserve you all by His mighty right hand, Amen!—that there are among you customs [lit. “sections”, <i>fuṣūl</i>] in need of correction and rectification (<i>al-iṣlāḥ wa-t-tahrīr</i>). Though by long-standing practice throughout the years they have come to be regarded as good, we have learnt that, in the opinion of the men of rectification (<i>aṣḥāb at-tahrīr</i>), they are harmful. Perhaps it is on account of these very things that you have been visited with continual sorrows and grievous afflictions, for divisions in the rites are exceedingly perilous. They remain hidden for a time, yet the wrath [of God] cometh at an hour we know not. Wherefore it seemed good unto me to remind you of these matters, that you might know them and observe the fitting order therein, even as it is upheld in all the churches of the Christians who are zealous for righteousness [lit. “men of rectification”] (<i>dawī at-tahrīr</i>).</p> | <p>ليعلم الاخ الحبيب السيد الارشبابيسقوبوس كبير بطرس نايب القلاية البطركية وبقية روسا كهنة الكرسي المرقصي والكهنة — صان الرب كافتكم بيمينه القوية، أمين — ان عندكم فصول تحتاج الاصلاح والتحرير واخذتها العادة بطول السنين بحيث كانت تظن انها جيدة وتعلمنا بروية اصحاب التحرير انها ضارة²⁰ وربما بسببها صارت هذه الاحزان المترادفة والتخلبات المهولة لان المخالفات الشرعية صعبة جداً وتتخذ الى وقت ما، ثم ياتي الرجز عنها في الوقت الذي لا نعلمه نحن، فلهذا ترجح عندي اذكركم بها لتعرفوها وتحفظوا²¹ فيها النظام (٣٤) اب) الواجب كما هو بكل كنايس المسيحيين ذوي التحرير .</p> |

Mina Monier, who argues plausibly that the manuscript may have been in Egypt before Athanasius III; see: *Monier M. The History of Codex Alexandrinus: New Evidence from Arabic Paratexts // Novum Testamentum. 2025. Vol. 67. P. 501–526.*

¹⁸ The reading of the word is doubtful, but clearly refers to the patriarchal throne of St. Mark, i.e., to the Patriarchate of Alexandria (the term *الكرسي المرقصي* is later used with the same meaning). It is possible that the original word was *القلاية* (“cell”). In cursive handwriting, the letter ق is indistinguishable from ت, and the digraph لا can look like رر or ور. The expression *القلاية المقدسة البطريركية المرقصية* (“the holy patriarchal cell of St. Mark”) with a similar meaning, indicating the Patriarchate of Alexandria, appears in the autograph of Patriarch Athanasius III in manuscript Vat. Ott. gr. 452, fol. 1r (https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Ott.gr.452); see also: McKendrick S. *The Codex Alexandrinus. Fig. 4.*

¹⁹ MS. *حفض*.

²⁰ MS. *ظارة*.

²¹ MS. *وتحفظو*.

| Section <I> | فصل |
|---|--|
| <p>The Divine Liturgy shall be celebrated at the third hour of the day [i.e., 9 o'clock in the morning], and at no other time—either at early dawn, or at sunrise, or at the ninth hour [i.e., 3 o'clock in the afternoon]. Let no one appeal to the pretext of Wednesday or Friday, or to great feasts, or to fear [of persecution?], or to any other excuse. Rather, if it should be impossible to serve it at the appointed time, then it is better to cancel it.</p> | <p>القُدّاس الالاهي يُعمل في الساعة الثالثة من النهار، وما عدى ذلك، اعني باكر او سحر او في التاسعة من النهار فلا يُعمل البتّة، ولا يحتجّ احد بالاربعاء والجمعة او الاعياد الكبار او الخوف او غير ذلك من الحجج بل اذا لم يمكن عمله في الوقت الواجب فتركه اولى²².</p> |
| Section <II> | فصل |
| <p>Let the first and second <i>qurbāna</i> (prospora) not be distributed outside the temple, on account of the external [=non-Christian] nations (<i>al-umam al-barrāniyya</i>) and others. But whosoever among the faithful desireth to partake thereof, let him receive it from the hand of the priest with fear and reverence, at the gate of the temple of offering (i.e., altar, <i>haykal at-taqdīma</i>), and let him consume it immediately, taking nothing out of the church. The portion shall be very small, so that it may be swallowed easily. These two prosphoras—the first and the second—shall be very small in size, so that the priest may without burden consume what remaineth thereof within the sanctuary. And if he be unable to consume them, let him give them to an innocent child or a pious elderly woman, that they may partake. Let this be consumed with great reverence and fear, within the church.</p> | <p>القربانة الاولى والثانية لا تُعطى بزّا الهيكل بسبب الامم البرّانية وغيرها بل من أثر اخذها من المومنين فليأخذها من يد الكاهن بورع ونقّي²³ من باب هيكل التقديمه وياكلها لساعته ولا يخرج بها من الكنيسة، ولتكن قطعة لطيفة جداً حتى لا يتقل عليه اكلها، ولتكن هاتين القربانتين، اعني الاولى والثانية، صغاراً جداً حتى لا يتقل على الكاهن ما يتبقأ منها (١٣٥) داخل الهيكل ان ياكله، وان عجز عن اكله فليعطى لصبي طاهر او امرأة عجوز بازّة تتناوله، وهذا يوكل بغاية التقى والورع داخل البيعة.</p> |
| Section <III> | فصل |
| <p>Upon the completion of the Liturgy and the elevation of the Holy Gifts (<i>al-aḡyā = τὰ ἅγια</i>), a small amount of hot boiling water—if only a single drop—shall be poured in, according to the custom of the Christian churches. And let [the priest] diligently observe it.</p> | <p>وعند تمام القُدّاس ورفع الاجيا فليوضع قليل ماء حارّ مغلي ولو نقطة²⁴ واحدة حسب عادة الكنايس المسيحية وليهتم بهذا غاية الاهتمام.</p> |
| Section <IV> | فصل |
| <p>Let no more than one clergyman of each [ecclesiastical] rank serve at one and the same Liturgy, that is, only one priest and one deacon.</p> | <p>لا يقُدّس القُدّاس الواحد سوى كاهن واحد من كلّ طغمة، اعني قسّ واحد او شماس واحد فقط.</p> |

²² MS. اولاً

²³ MS. وتقا

²⁴ MS. نقطة

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| Section <V> | فصل |
| <p>The oil poured into the church lamps shall burn until it be wholly consumed. Yet if the one appointed over the lamps desireth, he may gather the remaining oil into one small lamp, and let it burn by night before the holy icons (<i>al-quwan al-muqaddasa</i>), until it be wholly consumed; for it hath become sanctified and an offering unto the Lord, and it is not permitted to use it for any other purpose.</p> | <p>الزيت الذي يوضع في قناديل البيعة فليوقد فيها الى ان يحترق²⁵ كله، واذا اراد القِيم على القناديل (٣٥ب) فالذي يبقى فيها من الزيت فليجمعه في قنديل صغير واحد وليقد بالليل امام القُون²⁶ المقدسة الى ان يحترق كله لانه صار مقدساً للرب وضحية وما يجب استعماله في شي آخر اصلاً.</p> |
| Section <VI> | فصل |
| <p>Rented candles should not be brought into the church at all, whether for baptism, or for the funeral, or for the wedding. Rather, everyone should bring what he can afford for any of these aforementioned occasions, even if it be a very thin candle. This is because candles lit in the church cannot be burned [afterwards] in the places of the nations (<i>amākin al-umam</i>). A candle lit during the Liturgy should not be taken out of the church at all; it should burn in [the church] because it has become an offering to the Lord.</p> | <p>شمع المُكْرَى²⁷ لا يُدْخَل البيعة اصلاً، لا في عماد ولا في جنازة ولا في اكليل بل ليُخْضِر كل واحد في هذه الاوقات المذكورة ما تصل اليه قدرته، ولو شمعة لطيفة جداً، لان الشمع الذي يوقد بالبيعة ما يجوز وقيدته ايضاً باماكن الامم، والشمعة التي توقد بالقداس فلا تُخْرَج ايضاً من (٣٦أ) البيعة اصلاً بل بها تحرق لانه صارت ضحية للرب.</p> |
| Section <VII> | فصل |
| <p>Let non-lenten food not be eaten on Wednesdays or Fridays during the Pentecost season [i.e., the seven weeks following Pascha], except only during the first week and the week of the Descent of the Holy Spirit. On all other Wednesdays and Fridays within the Pentecost season, fasting is to be observed, just as it is observed every week throughout the year. Likewise, on the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos [=August 15] and the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul [=June 29], if they fall on a Wednesday or Friday, non-lenten food shall not be eaten.</p> | <p>لا يوكل الزفر في الاربعاء والجمعة الخمسين الا في الجمعة الاولى وجمعة حلول روح القدس فقط، وبقيّة ايام الاربعاء والجمعة بالخمسين يحتفظ بها مثل ما يحتفظ بالاربعاء والجمعة طول السنة وكذلك نياح السيّدة وعيد بطرس ويولص ان صار في يوم اربعاء او جمعة فلا يوكل فيهما زفر.</p> |

²⁵ MS. تحترق.

²⁶ The term *qūna* (pl. *quwan*) instead of *ayqūna* (*ayqūnāt*) is typical of Copts and Orthodox Christians in Egypt. This is a distinctive Egyptian textual “marker” (cf.: Sinai ar. 390, fol. 117r, 118r, etc.; Sinai ar. 561, fol. 454r; Sinai ar. 563, 301v). See: *Graf G. Verzeichnis arabischer kirchlicher Termini*. Louvain, 1954. P. 94.

²⁷ MS. الكرى.

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| <p>Let every prudent person observe these customs [lit. “sections”] (<i>fuṣūl</i>), for their observance is very profitable to the soul, and their neglect is exceedingly harmful. Before the harm of [transgressing] them was made known, the punishment for [transgressing] them may have been light; but now that this has been revealed, the penalty for their violation has become more grievous. Observe them therefore throughout the whole See of Saint Mark (<i>al-kursī al-marquṣī</i>), so that the Lord may preserve you from every misfortune, grant you all of His divine blessings, and keep you by the watchful care of His sleepless eye. May it be so, by the intercessions of all the holy fathers. Amen.</p> | <p>هذه الفصول يحفظها محتكم فحفظها نافع للنفس جداً ومخالفتها ضارة الى الغاية القسوى. وقبل ان تُعرَف²⁸ (٣٦ ب) مضرّتها ربّما انّ عقوبتها كانت قليلة والان فاذا قد عُرفتْ فالعقوبة على مخالفتها صعبة فتحفظوا بها في كلّ الكرسي المرقسي يُحفظكم الرب من كل رزية ويُجلّ عليكم كلّ بركاته الالهية ويوقمكم بحراسة عينه التي لا تنام، يكون ذلك بوسائل كافة الابا الابرار، آمين.</p> |
| <p>These customs [lit. “sections”] (<i>fuṣūl</i>) shall be known to all hierarchs and priests, and they shall exhort and encourage [the faithful] to keep them—with their entire soul and body.</p> | <p>وسبيل هذه الفصول ان يعرف بها كلّ روسا الكهنة والكهنة ويندبوا الى حفظها والحثّ عليها بكلّ النفس والجسم.</p> |
| <p>I have inscribed my ‘<i>alāma</i> in confirmation [of the foregoing]. [‘<i>Alāma</i>]: “Amen”.</p> | <p>وضعتُ <علامتي>²⁹ للتاكيد عليها: "أمين".</p> |

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.



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²⁸ MS. يعرف

²⁹ MS. عل سي

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