

Review of Anne BOUD'HORS,
LE CANON 8 DE CHENOUTE : D'APRES LE MANUSCRIT
IFAO COPTE 2 ET LES FRAGMENTS COMPLEMENTAIRES

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The writings of Shenute who was between about 385 and 465 the head of a monastery in Upper Egypt, known as the 'White Monastery' or 'Monastery of Shenute', have been massively revealed when the remains of the monastery's library were discovered in the 1880s. The few hundred manuscripts kept in this library were quickly cut up and dismantled and are now scattered in collections worldwide, often in a very fragmentary state. Copies of Shenute's works (about one hundred) have known the same fate. Stephen Emmel has shown how these works were structured¹: eight volumes of *Discourses* (in Coptic *λογος*) addressed to various people, and nine volumes of *Canons* (*κανων*) intended for monastic communities, and a correspondence. The most complete witness of volume 8 of Shenute's *Canons* is kept, for its most part, in the IFAO (French Institute of Oriental Archaeology) in Cairo, and known as « IFAO copte 2 ». It belonged to the library of the White Monastery. A few other fragments are now in the French National Library in Paris, the National Library of Naples and the British Library in London. Manuscript known as IFAO Copte 2 is the best kept witness of the collections of sermons by Shenute and maybe even of all the manuscripts that once belonged to the library of the White Monastery (128 leaves out of 160 are preserved). It is the critical edition and translation of this manuscript that Anne Boud'hors offers in this book.

The book has two volumes, the first one containing an extensive introduction and the edition of the text itself, the second one containing the translation, the indexes and the plates. The great advantage of this volume is that it offers colour plates for every leaf of the manuscript. The first section of the introduction explains how the manuscript arrived from the White Monastery in the IFAO and how leaves of the same manuscript were scattered in other collections. A second part is devoted to the codicological study of the manuscript, namely a material description of the leaves (number, state of preservation, size, layout of the text, pagination, binding) and also of the general economy of the

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manuscript, that is how the different sermons contained in *Canon 8* are organized. As a third part, the editor gives a study of the palaeographical features of the manuscript. She notes that there might have been two or even three different copyists for the same manuscript and gives a description of their hands. A few pages are also devoted to note the corrections, omissions and additions that occur in the course of the text. The fourth section deals with spelling and diacritics. Although the spelling of the manuscript is rather regular and « classic », it offers a few noteworthy characteristics. The diacritical signs are thoroughly studied, especially the supralinear signs and the role they play in the problem of syllabification. Grammatical features are summed up in the fifth part. It offers a view of well-known grammatical phenomena attested by the manuscript (use of the « affective » article $\mu/\tau/\nu$, southern features) but also presents a few less known constructions. Its goal is to try to elucidate certain difficulties that the editor faced in the process of translating the text. In that perspective, the editor also gives a few elements about the rhetoric's of Shenute's style of writing and about the monastic and religious vocabulary. The sixth section deals with parallel manuscripts, giving a quick description of each of them (preserved fragments, codicological description, spelling and grammar). With these information, the editor sums up the history of the manuscript tradition.

Finally, the editor gives some elements of commentary with a study of the content of *Canon 8*. She notes that it is difficult to give a precise idea of the content of this collection of sermons. It deals generally with monastic discipline. In *Canon 8*, Shenute appears to be constantly fighting the monks' lack of discipline and to be torn between the necessity to punish the bad apples and the desire to leave them to God's wrath. She notes that the main themes of the collection are sickness and clothes: these two themes are connected with each other since, whether real or symbolic, sickness is of a dermatological kind, and the sick person cannot bear the contact of clothes on his body. The central focus around which those two themes are developed is the body, both the ill body of the abbot who probably suffered from a chronic skin disease and the body of the monastic community. A detailed summary of the five sermons and the two letters that constitute *Canon 8* is given.

¹ S. EMMEL, *Shenute's Literary Corpus*, 2 vol., Leuven 2004.