

L'ouvrage de Jean-Luc Fournel constitue une formidable synthèse en même temps qu'une introduction pour qui s'intéresse au multilinguisme de l'Égypte gréco-romaine, mais aussi des sociétés anciennes en général, qu'on soit philologue ou historien (ou les deux). Il se révèle aussi être une mine bibliographique par la diversité du corpus abordé. Car s'il traite essentiellement de sources documentaires, celles-ci sont régulièrement et méthodiquement confrontées aux sources littéraires (patristiques, hagiographiques, normatives, historiques) — c'est là l'une des caractéristiques des travaux de l'auteur qui en fait la profondeur et la qualité.

Esther Garel

Francis X. Gumerlock with contributions by Francesca Lecchi and Tito Orlandi, *Pseudo-Cyril of Alexandria: Commentary on the Apocalypse*. Stone Tower Press, Middletown, RI, 2021, viii + 145 pages. \$24.95

Medieval Coptic theology and the reception of Revelation are often neglected fields and this small volume makes fine contributions in both. It provides an introduction, translation, and transcription of the Sahidic Coptic pseudo-Cyril of Alexandria's *Commentary on Revelation*, which covers Revelation chapters 7 through 12.¹ I will refer to the commentary in this review with the term "encomium", as it is called in its primary manuscript witness.

Gumerlock begins with an overview of the main manuscript containing the encomium: MS Pierpont Morgan Coptic 591 ff. 11v–33r, copied in 861 CE.² There remain two further manuscript fragments found in MS BnF Coptic 131 [3], ff. 58–61 and 131 [7] f. 63. Until this volume, no Coptic edition of the encomium had ever been published, but in 1981 Tito Orlandi did publish an Italian translation of his readings of the Pierpont Morgan manuscript³ (p. 3–4). Since then, I and a few others have made sparing use of the encomium, but little else has been done.⁴

In Gumerlock's thorough introduction he notes that the text was likely not an actual homily, but more of a lecture, for it does not seem to have been delivered in the course of the liturgy. He hence, I think rightly, concludes that the encomium most probably was part of a larger lecture series on Revelation (p. 4–5). Gumerlock then analyzes the content of the encomium, establishing its theological background, and comparing its interpretive maneuvers with many other ancient and

¹ *Clavis Coptica* #0107, see also <https://allas.paths-erc.eu/works/107>

² Pictures of the manuscript may be found at <https://archive.org/details/PhantoolLibrary/m591%20Combined%20%28Bookmarked%29%20/page/n23/mode/2up?view=theater>

³ Tito Orlandi (ed.), "Cirillo Vescovo di Alessandria," in *Omelie copte*, trans. Tito Orlandi (Torino 1981), 121–144.

⁴ Other than Orlandi, the most significant contribution can be found in the description of the encomium in the *Clavis Coptica* and in Leslie S.B. MacCoull, "MS. Morgan 591: The Apocalypse Commentary of Pseudo-Cyril of Alexandria," in *Studia Patristica*, vol. 20, ed. Elizabeth Livingstone (Leuven 1989), 33–39. See also T. C. Schmidt, *The Book of Revelation and Its Eastern Commentators: Making the New Testament in the Early Christian World* (Cambridge 2021).

medieval commentaries on Revelation, some of which Gumerlock himself has been responsible for translating (p. 5–19).

Foremost of Gumerlock's contributions are his observations regarding the date of the encomium. He notes that the lecturer seems to be concerned with issues over Christ's resurrection, likely reflecting the debate between Severus of Antioch and Julian of Halicarnassus in the 520s (p. 27). Similarly, Gumerlock points out that the encomium also rebuts tritheism, which was of currency in certain miaphysite circles in the mid-sixth century (p. 28–29). Gumerlock believes that the encomium must have been delivered before the Islamic conquest of Egypt and the earlier persecution of Cyrus of Alexandria because there is no allusion to any kind of present crisis, despite the fact that Revelation had ample fodder for speaking of such things. (p. 30–32). This places the encomium before the 630s, several decades earlier than previously suspected.⁵ It also makes the encomium a fascinating lens through which to view the simmering theological debates fomenting the Coptic church at the time. I found myself generally persuaded by Gumerlock's dating.

In a novel move, Gumerlock also attempts to interpret the obscure references to prophetic chronological data scattered about the encomium, which speak of lengths of time in symbolic days and weeks (p. 22–27). These evidently are meant to correspond with certain historical or future events from the perspective of the lecturer. Gumerlock speculates that these events were likely of great theological relevancy to the Egyptian miaphysite perspective and then ventures some solutions. For example, the 28 weeks alluded to by the lecturer may have designated 196 years ($28 \times 7 = 196$ years according to the oft-used prophetic chronology of ancient and medieval writers). These 196 years, Gumerlock tentatively suggests, likely represent the span of time between the Edict of Milan (313 CE) and the journey of Severus of Antioch to Constantinople (508/9 CE). The encomium then designates an additional five weeks (35 years), which Gumerlock correlates to Justinian's condemnation of the Three Chapters (544 CE). While I do not think that all of Gumerlock's calculations work out properly, I do believe that Gumerlock is wise to interpret the symbolic chronological data in the encomium as somehow related to miaphysite historical concern. Greatly to his credit, Gumerlock encourages scholars to critique his preliminary numerological interpretations (p. 27).

Gumerlock concludes his introduction by discussing the possible sources which the lecturer used and suggests that the speaker may have had some access to the commentary of Oecumenius, but that this is not certain.⁶ Thus, unlike some other Revelation commentaries which repurposed large amounts of previous material, this encomium relied mostly on original, or at least unpreserved, interpretations (p. 32–35).

The English translation was, initially, made from the Italian translation of Tito Orlandi by Francesca Lecchi in 2011 at the request of Gumerlock, presumably

⁵ Orlandi, "Cirillo Vescovo di Alessandria" 125. For a more ambiguous position on dating, see MacCull, "MS. Morgan 591" 37.

⁶ Oecumenius (550 CE), a Greek author, wrote the earliest preserved fully extant commentary on Revelation. His work was then utilized, without acknowledgment, by Andrew of Caesarea (600 CE), whose own commentary was immensely influential in the Greek, Slavonic, Armenian, and Georgian churches, see Schmidt, *The Book of Revelation* 30–31.

for his personal research. This was then edited by Dr. Seth Fabian, with Gumerlock adding footnotes. However, in 2021, Orlandi himself compared the English translation of his then 40-year-old Italian translation directly with the Sahidic Coptic, making suggestions and changes (p. 35–36). Orlandi also provided a Coptic transcription of the Pierpont Morgan manuscript while integrating one of the fragments (p. 67–68). I note that Orlandi did correct some errors that found their way into his Italian translation, such as the “half-hour” (Rev 8:1) of silence, which in his original Italian was mistakenly rendered as “nine hours.”⁷ The translation is fluid, and, by spot checking the Coptic, I found it accurate too. One could wish though that the Coptic transcription included the sectional numberings of the English translation to afford the reader ease of reference.

Gumerlock concludes with three appendices (p. 117–131); one of which gives a translation of the *Definition of Chalcedon*; another which valuably discusses the reception of Revelation in sixth century commentaries; and a third which, as a happy bonus, provides the only translation of the Revelation exegesis in the *Synopsis of Sacred Scripture (Synopsis Scriptureae Sacrae)*, which may be found in PG 28:427–432.

To sum up, this volume provides the encomium’s only Coptic transcription, its best translation, and its best introduction. Gumerlock is to be greatly commended for bringing to the Anglophone world a valuable witness to late antique Coptic theology and especially to the reception of Revelation — it is yet another contribution to his already considerable work on Revelation in the ancient and medieval worlds. Orlandi, whose labor in Coptic studies has been invaluable, should also be praised for diligently reviewing and improving the work of his younger years.

The book will be of interest to Coptologists, historical theologians, and Revelation mavens of all flavors.

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Monika R. M. Hasitzka, *Koptisches Sammelbuch V. Mitteilungen aus der Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek, XXIII/5*. De Gruyter, Berlin & Boston, 2020, 253 pages. ISBN 978-3-11-067067-7. €119,95.

In this fifth volume of the *Koptisches Sammelbuch*, Monika Hasitzka gathers together 214 texts (numbers 2164–2377 in the series) from a range of publications. The texts span the late 5th century to the 10th/11th century and cover a broad geographic area from the Fayum to Elephantine, from both monastic and secular communities. Most of the texts are in the Sahidic dialect, but other dialects are also represented, including an early Bohairic letter (2167) and a late letter written on paper in Fayumic (2183). As with the Greek *Sammelbuch (SB)*, the collection is centred on non-literary texts, but with the addition of inscriptions and prayers.¹ The volume is divided into eight sections based on textual categories: letters,

⁷ Orlandi, “Cirillo Vescovo Di Alessandria” 130, §14.

¹ Note that for inscriptions, the now regular contribution to the *BASP* by Alain Delattre, Jitse Dijkstra, and Jacques van der Vliet, “Christian Inscriptions from Egypt and Nubian” (CIEN), should be consulted (as of 2021, eight instalments have been published).