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A New Fragment of Athanasius's Thirty-Ninth *Festal Letter*: Heresy, Apocrypha, and the Canon*

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Athanasius of Alexandria's thirty-ninth *Festal Letter* remains one of the most significant documents in the history of the Christian Bible. Athanasius wrote the letter, which contains the first extant list of precisely the twenty-seven books of the current New Testament canon, in 367 C.E., during the final decade of his life. Like many of his annual Easter letters, the thirty-ninth was fairly long, but only a small portion of the text survives in Greek.¹ The Greek excerpt contains Athanasius's lists of the books of the Old and New Testaments, which he calls "canonized," and a list of a few additional books, like the *Shepherd of Hermas*, which he says are not canonized, but are useful in the instruction of catechumens. Most studies of the formation of the Christian canon, including very recent ones, examine only this Greek fragment and so discuss only the contents of the lists. But already in the late-nineteenth-century fragments of the much more extensive Coptic translation had been published, and a few scholars, such as Carl Schmidt and Theodor Zahn, used them to write penetrating studies of the letter.² In 1955 Lefort published all

* As I note below, the text and translation that I present here owe much to Stephen Emmel and Gregor Wurst, with whom I first read the new fragment in a seminar at the University of Münster several years ago, in addition to discussing several problems with Professor Emmel in Münster more recently. The Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung supported both of my visits to Münster. I presented an earlier version of this paper to the annual meeting of the North American Patristics Society; the questions and criticisms of the colleagues there, as well as those of the anonymous reviewer, helped me to clarify my points. I am grateful to these people and institutions.

¹ Périclès-Pierre Joannou, *Fonti. Discipline générale antique (IV^e–IX^e s.)* (2 vols.; Rome: Grottaferrata, 1963) 2:71–76.

² Carl Schmidt, "Der Osterfestbrief des Athanasius vom J. 367," in *Nachrichten von der Königl. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse aus dem Jahre*

the then-known Coptic fragments in his book of Coptic Athanasiana, and then in 1984 Coquin published another long fragment.³ These served as the basis for my 1995 translation and my 1994 article in this journal on the social context of canon formation in fourth-century Egypt.⁴

Since that time, however, another new fragment of the Coptic text has been discovered. This paper introduces the new fragment to Anglophone scholars, discusses some problems with its text and translation, assesses how it may affect our understanding of the context and purpose of the letter as a whole, and presents an English translation of all the known text. When I read the letter in the mid 1990s, I argued that Athanasius's promotion of a biblical canon supported a parish-based, episcopally-centered spirituality in opposition to other forms of Christian authority, namely, the teacher and the martyr. I still think that this is the case, but the new fragment does suggest that I underestimated the specifically anti-heretical intent of the letter and of Athanasius's canon. That is, Athanasius promoted a biblical canon not only—as I argued earlier—to support one form of Christian piety, social formation, and authority in opposition to others, but also to refute the specific teachings of persons and groups that he deemed “impious” and “heretics.”

■ The New Fragment: Text, Translation, and Contents

The new fragment is preserved in the A. S. Pushkin State Fine Arts Museum in Moscow and was published by Alla Elanskaya in 1994.⁵ But Elanskaya did not recognize what her tenth- or eleventh-century leaf of Sahidic Coptic really was, and instead called it “part of a sermon against the Manichaeans.” In 2001 Enzo Lucchesi identified it as a part of Athanasius's letter, and he published a French translation of it.⁶ Alberto Camplani therefore could include it in his outstanding Italian translation of and commentary on the *Festal Letters*, published in 2003. Camplani's book is now the starting point for anyone who studies the *Festal*

1898 (Göttingen: Horstmann, 1898) 167–203; idem, “Ein neues Fragment des Osterfestbriefes des Athanasius vom Jahre 367,” in *Nachrichten von der Königl. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse aus dem Jahre 1901* (Göttingen: Horstmann, 1902) 326–48; Theodor Zahn, *Athanasius und der Bibelkanon* (Leipzig: Deichert, 1901) 1–36; idem, *Grundriss der Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons* (Leipzig: Deichert, 1901) 58–60.

³ Louis-Theophile Lefort, *S. Athanase. Lettres festales et pastorales en copte* (CSCO 150; Leuven: Durbecq, 1955) 16–22, 58–62; René-Georges Coquin, “Les lettres festales d’Athanase (CPG 2102). Un nouveau complément: Le manuscrit IFAO, copte 25,” *OLP* 15 (1984) 133–58.

⁴ David Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism* (Oxford Early Christian Studies; Oxford: Clarendon, 1995) 326–32; idem, “Canon Formation and Social Conflict in Fourth-Century Egypt: Athanasius of Alexandria's Thirty-Ninth *Festal Letter*,” *HTR* 87 (1994) 395–419.

⁵ Alla I. Elanskaya, *The Literary Coptic Manuscripts in the A. S. Pushkin State Fine Arts Museum in Moscow* (Supplements to VC 18; Leiden: Brill, 1994) 379–80.

⁶ Enzo Lucchesi, “Un nouveau complément aux *Lettres festales* d’Athanase,” *AnBoll* 119 (2001) 255–60.

Letters.⁷ In 2005 Gabriella Aragione translated the complete known text of *Festal Letter* 39 into French.⁸

The Moscow fragment presents some textual and translation problems. The Coptic translation of our letter survives fragmentarily in two medieval manuscripts from the White Monastery, now designated MONB.AS and MONB.AT, which Lefort called “Codex B” and “Codex C” respectively. These manuscripts contained collections of Athanasius’s *Festal Letters*; because their contents parallel the Syriac translations of the letters (where they are extant) and the surviving Greek citations, there can be no doubt that they represent ancient translations of the genuine *Festal Letters*. Our fragment belongs to MONB.AT, or Lefort’s Codex C, and fills a lacuna precisely.⁹ Unfortunately, the original scribe did not do a great job: he had to do a lot of erasing, and he left out some letters. Moreover, the leaf appears to be poorly preserved. Short of going to Moscow or acquiring digital photographs, the best that one can do is examine the plates that Elanskaya helpfully included in her book.¹⁰ In my translation I have presented Elanskaya’s Coptic text, with some revisions, and numbered the lines for reference.

The incomplete opening sentence of the fragment concludes Athanasius’s argument in paragraphs 23–24 that, even if the so-called “apocryphal books” contain some useful teachings, there is no need for any Christian to consult them because the entire Christian faith can be found in the canonized Scriptures. He explains that all the central doctrines, including the incarnation of the Word, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment, can be found in the Bible.

He turns, then, to argue—in paragraph 25—that passages from the Bible expose the impious or heretical character of certain deviant teachers and groups, namely, the Manichaeans, Marcion, the Montanists (“the people in Phrygia”), the Arians, and the Melitians (“parasites” of the Arians). The references to the Montanists as “Phrygians” and to the Melitians as “parasites” of the Arians are characteristic of Athanasius.¹¹ Still, this type of brief catalogue of heresies is not common in Athanasius’s works; the closest parallels may be in the *Life of Antony*, where Antony warns against the Melitians, the Manichaeans, and the Arians, and in the *Orations against the Arians*, where Manichaeans, “Phrygians,” and other heretics

⁷ Alberto Camplani, *Atanasio di Alessandria. Lettere festali*; Anonimo, *Indice delle lettere festali* (Milan: Paoline, 2003) 498–518.

⁸ Gabriella Aragione, “La *Lettre festale* 39 d’Athanasie. Présentation et traduction de la version copte et de l’extrait grec,” in *Le canon du Nouveau Testament. Regards nouveaux sur l’histoire de sa formation* (ed. Gabriella Aragione, Eric Junod, and Enrico Norelli; Le Monde de la Bible 54; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2005) 198–219.

⁹ For a complete discussion of the transmitted text of the *Festal Letters*, see Camplani, *Atanasio di Alessandria*, 595–602; on our letter, see 503. Aragione provides a helpful summary table in “La *Lettre festale* 39,” 202.

¹⁰ Elanskaya, *Literary Coptic Manuscripts*, plates CXLI–II.

¹¹ Phrygians or Cataphrygians: Athanasius, *Orationes contra Arianos* 1.3 and 2.43; 3.47; idem, *De synodis* 13. Meletians as “parasites”: Athanasius, *Epistolae festales* 41, in Lefort, *Lettres festales*, 62.

appear together in a couple of dense passages.¹² These other passages do not, however, include brief descriptions of each heresy's distinct false teaching as the new fragment does. It is interesting that Athanasius appears to consider the status of the Creator-God to be the distinctive impiety of the Manichaeans.

The last portion of the Moscow fragment, paragraph 26, confirms my earlier guess that Egyptian Christians cited 1 Corinthians 2:9—"What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived"—in support of their use of apocryphal books.¹³ We can now see a special edge to Athanasius's earlier question about Jesus the true Teacher: "Who can convince those whom he teaches about 'things that eye has not seen nor ear heard nor have arisen upon the human heart,' except he who alone knows the Father and has established for us the way to enter the kingdom of heaven?"¹⁴ Most likely both Athanasius and his opponents knew a version of the *Ascension of Isaiah*, in which the words that Paul cites appear. The use of the masculine singular pronoun in lines 42 and 48 to refer to the person who makes this argument is strange. Who is this "he"? Lucchesi wonders whether it might refer to Marcion, the only individual in the preceding passage, and Camplani suggests that it might be "a generic heretic."¹⁵ I believe Camplani has the better idea, but that it is likely the singular here is a mistake and that there should be a plural: "they have said" and "I will answer them." The reference to "contentious persons" in line 49 may support this hypothesis, and in the next paragraph Athanasius in fact refers to "the heretics" as claiming that Paul cited apocryphal books.

How does Athanasius respond to the citation of 1 Corinthians 2:9 in support of apocryphal books? Subsequently, in paragraph 27, a previously known section of the letter, Athanasius argues that heretics composed the apocryphal books recently and placed these words of Paul in one of their texts in order to make their work appear to be older than Paul. Here in lines 50–54, the awkward Coptic most likely does a poor job of translating the Greek, but Athanasius's point seems clear enough. He has to deal with Paul's citation as somehow biblical because Paul introduces it with the phrase "as it is written." So Athanasius argues that Paul does not support or commend (συνιστάναι) his arguments with simply any words; rather, he does so with words from the Scriptures.¹⁶ According to Athanasius, Paul, however, does not always quote the relevant biblical text exactly, but instead paraphrases, giving its meaning (νοῦς). And in this case Athanasius claims that Paul has paraphrased a portion of Isaiah 29, which refers to blind and deaf people and people without any hope.

¹² Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 68; idem, *Orationes contra Arianos* 1.3 and 2.43.

¹³ Brakke, "Canon Formation and Social Conflict," 413.

¹⁴ Paragraph 9.

¹⁵ Lucchesi, "Un nouveau complément," 259; Camplani, *Atanasio di Alessandria*, 515 n. 34.

¹⁶ For similar uses of συνιστάναι as "commend" or "support," see Athanasius, *Epistula ad episcopos Aegypti et Libyae* 9, and this letter 39.16.

■ Implications for the Interpretation of the Letter

While the beginning and end of the fragment merely extend or supplement what we already knew of Athanasius's argument, the brief catalogue of heresies with the biblical passages that refute them in its central section is genuinely new, and in the view of Alberto Camplani, it undermines the way in which I interpreted the letter back in 1994. In what follows I review my earlier position and then turn to the objections to it and the relevance of the Moscow fragment.

In the letter as we now know it, including the new fragment, Athanasius makes a variety of arguments against the use of non-canonical books, but he devotes considerable attention to two particular themes. The first is the irrelevance or even danger of human teachers. The Word of God is the only true Teacher—after all, he is Truth itself, and he never needed anyone to teach him. The Word's truth is to be found completely and plainly in the Scriptures, and so there is no need to seek it in other books or from other teachers. The second theme is that no "apocryphal" books really come from Isaiah, Moses, Enoch, or any other authoritative ancient figure. They all published their teaching openly, and any "apocryphal" books attributed to them must be recent inventions of heretics. He accuses the Melitians specifically of composing and promoting the use of apocryphal books.

My reading contextualized these two themes by associating them with two forms of Christian spirituality, authority, and social organization that were traditional in Egyptian Christianity, but which Athanasius opposed. The first, following Rowan Williams, I called academic Christianity, a tradition of study under the guidance of a learned and inspired teacher, which I traced back to Alexandrians such as Basilides, Clement, Valentinus, and Origen and saw exemplified by Arius in the fourth century.¹⁷ In an earlier *Festal Letter*, written in 352, Athanasius had similarly contrasted "the words of the saints" and "the fancies of human invention"; only the New Testament authors transmit the teachings of the Word "without alteration," and thus "of these the Word wants us to be disciples, and they should be our teachers, and it is necessary for us to obey only them."¹⁸ The second was an apocalyptically oriented mode of piety, found in the traditions that David Frankfurter studied in his book on the *Apocalypse of Elijah* and which I saw continuing into the fourth century in the cult of the martyrs and the use of so-called apocryphal books, both taken up most enthusiastically by the Meletians.¹⁹ In contrast to these, Athanasius offered an episcopally-centered piety, which valued adherence to the clergy and its sacraments and found revealed truth not through study under a learned teacher,

¹⁷ See Rowan Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition* (London: Darton, Longman, & Todd, 1987) 82–91.

¹⁸ *Epistulae festales* 2.7 (which is actually no. 24, written in 352 C.E.), in *The Festal Letters of Athanasius: Discovered in an Ancient Syriac Version* (ed. William Cureton; London: Society for the Publication of Oriental Texts, 1848) 24–25.

¹⁹ See David Frankfurter, *Elijah in Upper Egypt: The Apocalypse of Elijah and Early Egyptian Christianity* (Studies in Antiquity and Christianity; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993).

nor through revelations at martyr shrines, but through a stable canon of Scriptures, interpreted by the official catholic church. I summed up the differences among these competing modes of Christian spirituality in terms of three authoritative figures: the teacher, the martyr, and the bishop. In this view, it was not so much the specific “heresies” named by Athanasius (“Arians” and “Melitians”) that prompted the letter and the promulgation of a canon, as much as the general forms of spirituality, social organization, and authority that they represented.

My argument met with some criticism even before the appearance of the new fragment.²⁰ Most criticism has been aimed at the distinction between academic and episcopal Christianities. One objection is that labeling Alexandrian Christians like Arius “academic” renders them “marginal” and places them in “elite and insular” schools.²¹ To the contrary, “academic” may be a marginal category in the contemporary United States and perhaps in some centers of late ancient Christianity, but it was not at all marginal or insular in Alexandrian Christianity. Rather, an academic mode of spirituality, one focused on the study of sacred texts under a learned teacher, was Alexandria’s most traditional form of Christian piety, shaping the ethos not of isolated schools in our sense, but of study circles, public lectures, and worshiping communities that overlapped and often included clerical leadership. To be sure, such a spirituality was frankly elitist, as any reader of Clement or Origen will readily see—some people are more advanced than others—but that does not mean it could not be genuinely popular and religious, as Arius by all accounts was.

Another objection is that I have allowed the rhetoric of people like Irenaeus, Athanasius, and Epiphanius to shape my understanding of their opponents as charismatic teachers.²² It is true that many of the literary sources for our social information about ancient people (not only “heretics”) are prejudicial and characterized by polemical distortion or even outright lies. When Athanasius, Irenaeus, and others derided their opponents as “teachers”—which they tried to make into a term of disparagement—and ridiculed cultured study and theological speculation, they were trying to demean, and portray as non-Christian, activities that many Christians considered positive means toward contemplation of God and salvation. Especially when we have corroborating evidence from Arius’s own writings, I am inclined to construct in this case a sympathetic portrait from characteristics that hostile sources depict as negative.

²⁰ Many scholars have also accepted the argument: for example, Christoph Marksches, “The Canon of the New Testament in Antiquity: Some New Horizons for Future Research,” in *Homer, the Bible, and Beyond: Literary and Religious Canons in the Ancient World* (ed. Margalit Finkelberg and Guy G. Stroumsa; Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture 2; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 175–94, at 189–92, although he rightly criticizes my imprecise (and Athanasian) use of the term “Arians.”

²¹ Robert C. Gregg, review of R. Williams, *Arius*, *JTS* n.s. 40 (1989) 247–54; J. Rebecca Lyman, “Historical Methodologies and Ancient Theological Conflicts,” in *The Papers of the Henry Luce III Fellows in Theology* (ed. Matthew Zyniewicz; 6 vols.; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999) 3:75–96, at 84–85.

²² Lyman, “Historical Methodologies,” 95 n. 57.

Moreover, we must keep in mind the disingenuous self-representations of these bishops, who were themselves teachers and therefore doing some of the same things that their opponents were, as some of my critics have helpfully pointed out.²³ Consequently, we should not doubt the activity of teaching itself, but we must investigate the differing social contexts of Christian teaching and the ways in which Christian authors package, spin, and (de-)legitimate this activity. As Athanasius and others like him present the matter, when legitimate officeholders of the church (bishops) teach, they are faithfully passing on what Christ told the disciples, who subsequently informed their episcopal successors, and so they are not really teaching at all. Athanasius claims this about himself in our letter: “I have not written these things as if I were teaching, for I have not attained such a rank. . . . I thus have informed you of everything that I heard from my father,”²⁴ that is, Bishop Alexander of Alexandria. Personal qualities of learning and insight do not legitimate what the bishop says, but rather his place in a trustworthy succession. When others teach, in contrast, they invent ideas and lead Christians astray. These claims, however, require interrogation and do not rule out that other Christian leaders taught in other contexts and legitimated their teaching in other ways, as I have argued Arius did.

In his commentary on the *Festal Letters*, Camplani accepts my description of a shift in Alexandrian spirituality that Athanasius’s works both attest and promote. As Camplani phrases it, Origen and other early Alexandrians exhibit a pattern of spiritual growth in which an initial ethical distancing from the world facilitated increasingly advanced study of the Scriptures, which led to contemplation of God. Athanasius revised this pattern to place less emphasis on textual study and more on control of the body, and Christian spirituality took on a more explicitly social dimension in the form of a church inclusive of both monastic and married Christians, clergy and lay people. But Camplani objects to my mapping of these two forms of spirituality onto the social fabric of fourth-century Alexandrian Christianity. Arius, he points out, was a member of the clergy, and surely not all his supporters were learned; Didymus the Blind fits my social role of “teacher” perfectly, but supported Athanasian orthodoxy.²⁵

In Camplani’s view, then, the distinction between episcopally- and academically-oriented spiritualities fails “to capture the substance of the Athanasian attitude.” Here, he says, is where the new fragment comes into play: It makes clear that a specifically anti-heretical agenda formed the substance of what Athanasius was doing. The biblical canon was meant to expose and refute specific heretical teachers and groups.²⁶ Camplani goes on to describe the thirty-ninth *Festal Letter* as part of a wider “theological initiative” that Athanasius undertook in the years after he returned

²³ Lyman, “Historical Methodologies,” 84–91.

²⁴ Paragraph 32.

²⁵ Camplani, *Atanasio di Alessandria*, 151–52.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 82–83.

from his fifth and final exile in 366 C.E. In this period, according to Camplani, Athanasius proposed “a more comprehensive model of orthodoxy,” which included more than the right beliefs in matters of the Trinity and Christology that he had stressed earlier in his career. Instead, this new concept of orthodoxy embraced the whole of Christian piety, including a canon of Scripture, its orthodox dogmatic exegesis, proper observance of the cult of the saints, and a closer connection with the monastic movement. The small heresiological catalogue in the new fragment, which looks beyond the Arians to a wider range of heretical groups, indicates one facet of this new concept of orthodoxy. So, Camplani argues, it is not really an episcopal spirituality that Athanasius promotes, but rather an orthodoxy.²⁷

Camplani’s general point is, I think, correct. In his final years Athanasius sought to reform a range of existing practices in Egyptian Christianity and to consolidate the orthodox catholic church that he had promoted throughout his long career.²⁸ He devoted less attention to international theological developments and more time and energy to Egypt. I agree too that my original formulation of this effort, especially as found in the thirty-ninth *Festal Letter*, did not recognize sufficiently the specifically anti-heretical dimension of his project. That is, Athanasius opposed not only general forms of spirituality and authority, but also specific heretical teachings, such as Marcion’s rejection of the Old Testament. Still, Camplani’s notion of a more comprehensive conception of orthodoxy on Athanasius’s part, one that includes pious practices and not just doctrines, perhaps states in different terms my emphasis on Athanasius’s larger interest in conflicting types of religious authority and their corresponding modes of piety and social formation.

Athanasius’s lengthy critique of human teachers and of any teaching activity that is not simple exposition of the Scriptures, however, also indicates that he sees a particular culture of independent Christian instruction and study as the breeding ground for Arianism, Melitianism, and perhaps the other heresies that he names. Although I do not share Athanasius’s negative view of this spirituality, I do think that it existed and that Arius and Didymus are good fourth-century representatives of it. Arius may have been a presbyter, but evidence suggests that he legitimated his teaching by pointing not only to his clerical office—as Athanasius the bishop would—but also to his academic pedigree and learning—as Athanasius would not.²⁹ Likewise, Didymus may have been a firm supporter of Athanasian trinitarian orthodoxy and the episcopate, but his overall approach to Scripture and its study

²⁷ Camplani, *Atanasio di Alessandria*, 499–500.

²⁸ For my discussions of these efforts, see not only “Canon Formation and Social Conflict,” but also *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism*, 100–2, and “‘Outside the Places, Within the Truth’: Athanasius of Alexandria and the Localization of the Holy,” in *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt* (ed. David Frankfurter; Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 134; Leiden: Brill, 1998) 445–81.

²⁹ Brakke, “Canon Formation and Social Conflict,” 403–4. See now also the summary portrait in Edward J. Watts, *City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria* (The Transformation of the Classical Heritage 41; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006) 171–74.

is not that of Athanasius. As Richard Layton has nicely put it, “the instruction of Didymus was supportive of, but not necessarily in service to, ecclesiastical authorities.”³⁰ Didymus’s school demonstrates that Athanasius’s campaign of “revolutionary anti-intellectualism” did not succeed and that the bishop did not appreciate the possibility of a fully orthodox philosophical culture independent of the episcopate, perhaps with the exception of monks like Antony, taught only by God.³¹ Edward Watts has described how Athanasius’s *Life of Antony* contributed to this campaign by depicting the monk as a teacher of “a new kind of philosophy that derived not from suspect speculation and deceptive argumentation, but from the purity of scripture and the clarity of faith.”³² During the late-fourth century, he argues, Alexandrian Christian intellectual circles moved away from regular interaction with pagan philosophical culture, and Christian instruction increasingly came from monastically-oriented figures like Didymus and Evagrius Ponticus, whose authority was based on an ascetic self-control and pedigree as much as, if not more than, on mastery of traditional philosophy.³³

Although Eric Junod believes that my anti-teaching hypothesis lacks supporting evidence in *Festal Letter* 39 and other Athanasian works,³⁴ the substantive claim of his excellent recent article coheres with my argument—as even its subtitle (“De la construction savante du Nouveau Testament à la clôture ecclésiastique du canon”) indicates. Junod suggests that at the beginning of the fourth century the biblical “canon,” as found in Eusebius of Caesarea, was the still incomplete and speculative project of Christian intellectuals, but with Athanasius the canon became a fixed and ecclesiastical institution. Junod’s argument closely parallels my distinction between the flexible and indeterminate “academic canon” of independent Christian teachers like Origen and the bounded and unchangeable “episcopal canon” promulgated by bishops like Athanasius. In fact, I cited Eusebius as an example of the former. I called Athanasius’s list of books that were not “canonized,” but were useful for the instruction of catechumens, a “remnant of the academic canon,” the status of which was “awkward” in Athanasius’s program.³⁵ Junod has provided a more specifically historical argument for this last claim. Athanasius, Junod points out, knew that he was being innovative in defining a set canon: The bishop speaks of his “audacity” (τολμηρία) in doing so. In comparison to the lists of Eusebius, Athanasius lacks the category of “disputed” works (ἀντιλεγόμενα), a category that Junod calls both “learned and ecclesiastically embarrassing,” for it indicates

³⁰ Richard A. Layton, *Didymus the Blind and His Circle in Late-Antique Alexandria: Virtue and Narrative in Biblical Scholarship* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004) 18.

³¹ The phrase “revolutionary anti-intellectualism” comes from Watts, *City and School*, 181.

³² *Ibid.*, 177–81.

³³ *Ibid.*, 181–86.

³⁴ Eric Junod, “D’Eusèbe de Césarée à Athanase d’Alexandrie en passant par Cyrille de Jérusalem. De la construction savante du Nouveau Testament à la clôture ecclésiastique du canon,” in *Le Canon du Nouveau Testament* (ed. Aragione) 169–95, at 189–90.

³⁵ Brakke, “Canon Formation and Social Conflict,” 408–10.

continued discussion among Christian intellectuals and a lack of unanimity within the church. Athanasius replaced this category with books that are not canonical, but are “to be read”; Junod plausibly suggests that Athanasius derived this list from the curriculum of the Alexandrian Catechetical School. Unlike Eusebius’s “disputed” books, Athanasius could present this new intermediate category (between “canonical” and rejected) as traditional and “integral to the life and teaching of the Church.”³⁶ In other words, Athanasius marks a transition from one kind of canon, suited to a Christian intellectual culture of study and debate, to another, suited to a Christian episcopal culture of worship and orthodoxy.

This last point restates part of my earlier argument about the significance of the thirty-ninth *Festal Letter*: Although most scholars remain focused on the lists of books, the greater importance of the letter is that it reveals the role of canon formation in supporting one form of Christian piety and authority and undermining others. Different scriptural practices accompany different modes of authority and spirituality, and we should not take the bounded canon of episcopal orthodoxy as either the inevitable *telos* of early Christian history or the only way that Christians construed and used sacred writings. The new fragment, however, makes clear that in establishing a defined canon Athanasius sought to undermine not only a general spirituality of free intellectual inquiry and its academic mode of authority, but also the specific false doctrines to which he believed such a spirituality gave rise.

■ Translation (and Text of the New Fragment)

Here follows a fresh translation of the entire letter.³⁷ For the new fragment I include a revised version of Elanskaya’s text as well. The text and translation of the fragment presented here owe much to the deciphering and linguistic abilities of Stephen Emmel and Gregor Wurst, with whom I first read it. The line numbers in the Coptic text have no relation to the lines in the manuscript, which arranges the text in two columns. The paragraph numbers are those that Camplani established in his translation.

³⁶ Junod, “D’Eusèbe de Césarée,” 191–94.

³⁷ The Coptic text is attested as follows: White Monastery manuscript MONB.AS (Lefort’s Codex B) contains fragments of paragraphs 6–8 (Lefort, *Lettres festales*, 15–16), 11–23 (Lefort, *Lettres festales*, 16–21), and 32–34 (Lefort, *Lettres festales*, 21–22). MONB.AT (Lefort’s Codex C) contains fragments of paragraphs 6–8 (Lefort, *Lettres festales*, 58–60), 8–24 (Coquin, “Les lettres festales,” 138–44), 24–26 (Elanskaya, *Literary Coptic Manuscripts*, 379–80), and 26–29 (Lefort, *Lettres festales*, 60–62). In addition to adding the new fragment, I have revised slightly my translation of 1995 by correcting a few errors, adding some biblical references, using American spelling, and conforming the paragraphing to that which Camplani established. I have used the following editorial signs in the Coptic text: \square indicates text restored in a lacuna; \llbracket indicates text deleted (e.g., to correct dittography); \langle indicates text added (e.g., to correct haplography); \cdot dots under letters indicate an uncertain reading.

6. [. . .] as Life, he came to those who are dead, and as God, he came to human beings. In this way those who did not seek him found him, and he was made manifest to those who did not ask him.³⁸ So too he became a light for the blind when he opened their eyes,³⁹ and he became a staff for the lame when he healed them and they walked.⁴⁰ Once and for all he became a teacher for everyone in everything.

7. For the teaching of piety does not come from human beings; rather, it is the Lord who reveals his Father to those whom he wills because it is he who knows him.⁴¹ First he did this to the apostles; one of them, Paul, writes to the Galatians: “I am informing you, brothers and sisters, about the gospel that was proclaimed through me, that it is not of human origin, nor was I taught it; rather, it is according to a revelation of Jesus Christ.”⁴² Moreover, writing to those in Ephesus, he said: “If you have heard about the working of the grace of God that has been given to me for you, how in a revelation I was informed about the mystery, just as I wrote to you earlier in a little bit as you are able, you desire to understand my teaching in the mystery of Christ, which was not revealed to the generations of the children of humanity as it has now been revealed to his prophets and holy apostles.”⁴³

8. Not they alone, brothers and sisters, are the ones to whom the Lord has become a teacher by revealing the mystery to them; rather, he is a teacher to us all. For Paul rejoices with his disciples that they have been taught about the gospel in this way: he prays in behalf of those in Ephesus that “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, might give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in his knowledge.”⁴⁴ The apostle knows that we all share in this prayer that he made for them (the Ephesians)—and not only at that former time when the Lord revealed the knowledge to human beings. No, it is he who “corrects until the end,” he who “teaches knowledge to humanity,” according to the word of the psalmist.⁴⁵ It is he whom his disciples asked to teach them how to pray, and he who taught daily in the temple, as Luke said.⁴⁶ It is he whom his disciples asked, “Teacher, when will these things happen, and what is the sign that all these things are going to be fulfilled?”⁴⁷ When his disciples asked him, “Where do you want us to prepare to eat the Passover?” he answered and said to them, “Behold, when you enter this city, a man will meet you carrying a jar. Follow him into the house that he enters

³⁸ See Isa 65:1; Rom 10:20.

³⁹ See Isa 35:5; Matt 11:5; Luke 4:18.

⁴⁰ See Luke 7:22.

⁴¹ See Matt 11:27; Luke 10:22; John 10:15; 17:25.

⁴² Gal 1:11–12.

⁴³ Eph 3:2–5.

⁴⁴ Eph 1:17.

⁴⁵ Pss 17(18):35; 93(94):10.

⁴⁶ Luke 11:1; 19:47.

⁴⁷ Mark 13:4; Luke 21:7.

and say to the master of the house, 'It is the Teacher who says to you, "Where is my guest room where I will eat the Passover with my disciples?"' ⁴⁸

9. Well indeed he spoke like this, for the name of Wisdom is fitting for him because it is he alone who is the true Teacher. For who is to be trusted to teach human beings about the Father, except he who exists always in his bosom? ⁴⁹ Thus, who can convince those whom he teaches about "things that eye has not seen nor ear heard nor have arisen upon the human heart," ⁵⁰ except he who alone knows the Father and has established for us the way to enter the kingdom of heaven? Therefore, he charged his disciples, just as Matthew said: "Let none of you be called 'Rabbi,' for your Teacher is one, and you are all brothers and sisters. And do not call for yourselves 'Father' on earth, for your Father in heaven is one. And do not be called 'Teacher,' for your Teacher, Christ, is one. And the great one among you will be your servant." ⁵¹

10. But it is not fitting, brothers and sisters, that we should listen to the holy words carelessly. Therefore, why does the apostle in one place call himself "teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth," ⁵² and in another place say about the Lord, "It is he who has made some apostles, and some preachers, and others pastors and teachers"? ⁵³ And James commands and says, "Let not many be teachers, my brothers and sisters: you know that we will receive a more severe judgment than you all." ⁵⁴ He did not say this because there were no teachers, but because there were some, although it was not necessary that there be teachers.

11. And yet, although these people (Paul and James) speak in this way, it is written in the gospel that the Lord commanded that we not be called "Rabbi" and that no one be called "Teacher" except the Lord alone. While I was examining these (passages), a thought occurred to me that requires your scrutiny. What I thought is this: The task of the teacher is to teach, and that of the disciple is to learn. But even if these people teach, they are still called "disciples," for it is not they who are the originators of what they proclaim; rather, they are at the service of the words of the true Teacher. For our Lord and our God Jesus Christ, because he wanted to inform us of this, said to his disciples, "What I say to you in the darkness, say in the light, and what you hear with your ears, proclaim upon the rooftops." ⁵⁵ For the words that the disciples proclaim do not belong to them; rather, they are what they heard from the Savior. Therefore, even if it is Paul who teaches, it is nevertheless Christ who speaks in him. ⁵⁶ And even if he says that the Lord has

⁴⁸ Luke 22:9–11.

⁴⁹ See John 1:18.

⁵⁰ 1 Cor 2:9.

⁵¹ Matt 23:8–11.

⁵² 1 Tim 2:7.

⁵³ Eph 4:11.

⁵⁴ Jas 3:1.

⁵⁵ Matt 10:27; see also Luke 12:3.

⁵⁶ See Gal 2:20.

appointed teachers in the churches,⁵⁷ he (the Lord) nevertheless first teaches them and then sends them out.

12. For the nature of everyone who is of the created order is to be taught, but our Lord and Demiurge is by nature a teacher. For he was not taught by someone else how to be a teacher; but all human beings, even if they are called “Teacher,” were disciples first. For all people are instructed because the Savior supplies them with the knowledge of the Spirit, so that “they all might be taught by God.”⁵⁸

13. But our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—being the Word of the Father and having not been instructed by anyone—rightly he alone is the Teacher, so that the Jews were astonished when they heard him and said, “How does he know the Scriptures without having been taught?”⁵⁹ Therefore, when he was teaching in the synagogue and healing the sick, the Jews persecuted him, and so “from their feet to their head they do not lack wounds or bruises”;⁶⁰ rather, such punishment came upon them as a great madness. For “they have not understood,” as it is written, “nor have they learned wisdom; rather, they walk in darkness.”⁶¹

14. And, following them, those from the heresies who have caught up to them, namely the wretched Melitians, by denying him, have walked in waterless places and have abandoned the spring of life.⁶² Therefore, even if they talk about the Passover hypocritically for the sake of the glory of human beings, their gathering is a bread of mourning, for they take counsel evilly against the truth, so that whoever sees such a gathering speaks the word that is written as suited to them: “Why have the nations become arrogant, and why have the peoples worried about vain things?”⁶³ For the Jews gather together like Pontius Pilate, and the Arians and the Melitians like Herod, not to celebrate the feast, but to blaspheme the Lord, saying, “What is truth?”⁶⁴ and “Take him away! Crucify him! Release to us Barabbas!”⁶⁵ For it is just like the request for Barrabas to say that the Son of God is a creature and that there was a time when he was not. As for them, it is no surprise that they have remained dead in their unbelief by being bound by their evil thoughts, just as the Egyptians were bound by their own axles.⁶⁶

15. But for our part, let us now keep the feast according to the tradition of our ancestors, because we have the Holy Scriptures, which are sufficient to instruct us perfectly. When we read them carefully with a good conscience, we will be “like the tree that grows upon places of flowing water, which brings forth its fruit in its

⁵⁷ See 1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11.

⁵⁸ John 6:45; Isa 54:13.

⁵⁹ John 7:15.

⁶⁰ Isa 1:6.

⁶¹ Ps 81(82):5.

⁶² See Matt 12:43; Luke 11:24; Jer 2:13; 7:13.

⁶³ Ps 2:1.

⁶⁴ John 18:38.

⁶⁵ Luke 23:18, 21.

⁶⁶ See Exod 14:25 in the LXX.

season and whose leaves do not wither.”⁶⁷ But inasmuch as we have mentioned that the heretics are dead but we have the divine Scriptures for salvation, and we are afraid that, as Paul wrote to the Corinthians,⁶⁸ a few of the simple folk might be led astray from sincerity and purity through human deceit and might then begin to read other books, the so-called apocrypha, deceived by their having the same names as the genuine books, I exhort you to bear with me if, to remind you, I write about things that you already know, on account of the church’s need and advantage.

16. As I begin to mention these things, in order to commend my audacity, I will employ the example of Luke the evangelist and say myself: Inasmuch as certain people have attempted to set in order for themselves the so-called apocryphal books and to mix these with the divinely inspired Scripture, about which we are convinced it is just as those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning and assistants of the Word handed down to our ancestors, it seemed good to me, because I have been urged by genuine brothers and sisters and instructed from the beginning, to set forth in order the books that are canonized, transmitted, and believed to be divine, so that those who have been deceived might condemn the persons who led them astray, and those who have remained pure might rejoice to be reminded (of these things).⁶⁹

17. There are, then, belonging to the Old Testament in number a total of twenty-two, for, as I have heard, it has been handed down that this is the number of the letters in the Hebrew alphabet. In order and by name they are as follows: first, Genesis; then Exodus; then Leviticus; and after this, Numbers; and finally Deuteronomy. After these is Joshua, the son of Nun; and Judges; and after this, Ruth; and again, next four books of Kings, the first and second of these being reckoned as one book, and the third and fourth likewise being one. After these are First and Second Chronicles, likewise reckoned as one book; then First and Second Esdras, likewise as one. After these is the book of Psalms; and then Proverbs; then Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs. After these is Job; and finally the Prophets, the twelve being reckoned as one book; then Isaiah; Jeremiah and with it, Baruch; Lamentations and the Letter; and after it, Ezekiel and Daniel. To this point are the books of the Old Testament.

18. Again, one should not hesitate to name the books of the New Testament. For these are the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; than after these, Acts of the Apostles and seven letters, called catholic, by the apostles, namely: one by James; two by Peter; then three by John; and after these, one by Jude. After these there are fourteen letters by Paul, written in this order: first to the Romans; then two to the Corinthians; and after these, to the Galatians; and next to the Ephesians; then to the Philipians and to the Colossians; and after these, two to the Thessalonians;

⁶⁷ Ps 1:3.

⁶⁸ See 2 Cor 11:3.

⁶⁹ See Luke 1:1–4.

and that to the Hebrews; and additionally, two to Timothy, one to Titus, and finally that to Philemon. And besides, the Revelation of John.

19. These are the springs of salvation, so that someone who thirsts may be satisfied by the words they contain. In these books alone the teaching of piety is proclaimed. Let no one add to or subtract from them.⁷⁰ Concerning them the Lord put the Sadducees to shame when he said, “You err because you do not know the Scriptures or their meaning,”⁷¹ and he reproved the Jews, “Search the Scriptures, for it is they that testify to me.”⁷²

20. But for the sake of greater accuracy, I add this, writing from necessity. There are other books, in addition to the preceding, which have not been canonized, but have been appointed by the ancestors to be read to those who newly join us and want to be instructed in the word of piety: the Wisdom of Solomon, the Wisdom of Sirach, Esther, Judith, Tobit, the book called *Teaching of the Apostles*, and the *Shepherd*.

21. Nevertheless, beloved, the former books are canonized; the latter are (only) read; and there is no mention of the apocryphal books. Rather, (the category of apocrypha) is an invention of heretics, who write these books whenever they want and then generously add time to them, so that, by publishing them as if they were ancient, they might have a pretext for deceiving the simple folk. Great is the hardheartedness of those who do this and who do not fear the word that is written: “You shall not add to the word that I commanded you, nor shall you subtract from it.”⁷³ Who has made the simple folk believe that those books belong to Enoch even though no Scripture existed before Moses? On what basis will they say that there is an apocryphal book of Isaiah? He preaches openly on the high mountain and says, “I did not speak in secret or in a dark land.”⁷⁴ How could Moses have an apocryphal book? He is the one who published Deuteronomy with heaven and earth as witnesses.⁷⁵

22. No, this can be nothing except itchy ears, trading in piety, and the pleasing of women.⁷⁶ Paul spoke about such people beforehand when he wrote to his disciple: “A time will come when they will not keep to the salvific teaching, but according to their own desire they will produce teachers for themselves, when their ear will itch, and they will turn their ears away from the truth and go after myths.”⁷⁷ For truly the apocryphal books are filled with myths, and it is a vain thing to pay attention to them, because they are empty and polluted voices. For they are the beginning of discord, and strife is the goal of people who do not see what is beneficial for the

⁷⁰ See Deut 13:1; 4:2; Rev 22:18–19.

⁷¹ Matt 22:29; Mark 12:24.

⁷² John 5:39.

⁷³ Deut 4:2.

⁷⁴ See Isa 40:9; 45:19.

⁷⁵ See Deut 4:26; 30:19; 31:28.

⁷⁶ See 2 Tim 4:3; 1 Tim 6:5; 2 Tim 3:6.

⁷⁷ 2 Tim 4:3–4.

church, but who desire to receive compliments from those whom they lead astray, so that, by publishing new discourses, they will be considered great people.

23. Therefore, it is fitting for us to decline such books. For even if a useful word is found in them, it is still not good to trust them. For this is work of the wickedness of those who have conceived of mixing one or two inspired texts, so that, through such deception, they might somehow cover up the evil teachings that they have clearly created. Therefore, it is even more fitting for us to reject such books, and let us command ourselves not to proclaim anything in them nor to speak anything in them with those who want to be instructed, even if there is a good word in them, as I have said. For what do the spiritual Scriptures lack that we should seek after these empty voices of unknown people? It is appropriate for us to cite the text that is written about them: “Is there no balm in Gilead nor physician there?”⁷⁸ and again, “Of what profit to you is the road to Egypt so that you drink the troubled water from Gehon?”⁷⁹ and again, “Of what profit to you is the way to Assyria that you drink the water from their rivers?”⁸⁰

24. Therefore, if we seek the faith, it is possible for us to discover it through (the Scriptures), so that we might believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. If (we seek after) the subject of his humanity, John cries out, “The Word became flesh and lived among us.”⁸¹ And on the subject of the resurrection, the Lord put the Sadducees to shame, saying, “Have you not read what is said to you by God, who says, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob’? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”⁸² On the subject of the coming judgment, it is written, “We shall all stand

1	ΠΗΔΡΗΠΡΗΝΑ ΠΡΕΧΣ ΧΕΚΑΣ	before the judgment seat of Christ,
2	ΕΡΕΠΟΥΑ ΠΟΥΑ ΧΙ ΠΗΕΒΟΛ	so that each may receive in his body
3	ΖΙΤΗΠΕΨΩΝΑ ΠΡΟΣΗΝΤΑΨΑΥ	recompense for what he has done,
4	ΕΙΤΕ ΑΓΑΘΟΝ ΕΙΤΕ ΠΕΘΟΝ ⁱ	whether good or evil.” ⁱⁱ
5	ΕΡΕΝΗΑΝΙΧΑΙΟΣ ΟΥΟΝΖ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΙΤΗΝΑΙ	25. It is through these
6	[[ΧΕΖΙΤΗΝΑ]] ΧΕΖΕΝΑΨΕΒΗΣ Η[Ε]	(passages) that the Manichaeans are
7	ΕΥΨΩΤΗ ΕΡΟΟΥ ΕΥΨΩ ΕΒΟΛ ⁱⁱⁱ	exposed as impious when they hear
8	ΕΤΒΕΠΠΟΥΤΕ ΧΕ[ΑΨ]ΤΑΝΙΟ ΠΠΚΑΣ	them proclaim about God ^{iv} : “He

⁷⁸ Jer 8:22.

⁷⁹ Jer 2:18

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ John 1:14.

⁸² Matt 22:31–32

ⁱ That is, ΠΕΘΟΟΥ. Elanskaya suggests the influence of ΑΓΑΘΟΝ.

ⁱⁱ 2 Cor 5:10; see also Rom 14:10.

ⁱⁱⁱ The photographed text is mostly illegible here. Elanskaya reads ΕΡΟΗ. Camplani suggests ΕΒΟΛ (*Atanasio di Alessandria*, 514), which makes more sense.

^{iv} Alternatively, “when they (the passages) are heard proclaiming about God.”

9 ΗΘΕ ΠΟΥΛΑΔΥ ΑΥΩ ΟΗ ΧΕΝΗΗ
 10 ΠΕΝΤΑΓΤΑΜΙΕΝΑΙ ΤΗΡΟΥ ΑΥΩ ΟΗ
 11 ΕΗΝΟΕΙ ΧΕΝΤΑΥΣΤΕΝΑΙΩΗ
 12 ΖΗΠΩΑΧΕ ΗΠΗΟΥΤΕ ΧΕΠΕΤΗΝΑΥ
 13 ΕΡΟQ ΝΤΑQΩΠΕ ΕΒΟΛ
 14 ΖΗΠΕΤΕΝQΩΟΠ ΔΗ.

 15 ΤΑΙ ΟΗ ΘΕ Ν||
 16 Ω||{Η}ΤΑQΩΥΗΖ ΕΒΟΛ Η[ΔΙ]ΗΑΚΙΟΗ
 17 ΧΕΝQΗΟΕΙ ΔΗ ΧΕΠΗΟΗΟC ΟΥΑΔΒ
 18 ΑΥΩ ΤΕΝΤΟΛΗ ΟΥΑΔΒ ΑΥΩ
 19 ΟΥΔΙΚΑΙΟΗ ΤΕ ΑΥΩ ΟΥΑΓΑΘΟΗ ΤΕ
 20 ΗΑΙCΤΑ ΕΡΕΠCΩΤΗΡ ΧΩ ΗΗΟC
 21 ΧΕΕΝΕΤΕΤΗΠΙCΤΕΥΕ ΕΗΩΥCΗC
 22 ΝΕΤΕΤΗΑΠΙCΤΕΥΕ ΕΡΟΙ ΠΕ
 23 ΑΠΕΤΗΝΑΥ ΓΑΡ CΖΑΙ ΕΤΒΗΗΤ ΑΥΩ ΟΗ
 24 ΧΕΖΟΤQΤ ΗΝΕΓΡΑΦΗ ΧΕΝΑΙ
 25 ΝΕΤΡΗΗΤΡΕ ΕΤΒΗΗΤ.
 26 [ΗΤ]ΟΟΥ ΔΕ ΟΗ ΝΕΓΡΑΦΗ ΕΤΟΥΑΔΒ
 27 ΝΕΝΤΑΥΟΥΕ[ΗΖ]ΗΕΤΖΗΤΕΦ<Ρ>Υ[ΓΙ]Α^{xi}
 28 ΕΒΟΛ ΧΕΖΕΗ[ΖΑΙ]ΡΕΤΙΚΟC ΝΕ
 29 ΖΗΠΤΡΕΠΕΠΝΑ ΕΤΟΥΑΔΒ ΕΙ ΕΠΕCΗΤ
 30 ΕΧΗΗΝΑΘΗΤΗC ΑΥΩ [Η]CΕΤΑΔQ
 31 [ΗΝΕΧΡ]ΙCΤ[ΑΗΟ]C.
 32 ΗΑΡ[Ι]ΑΗΟC ΔΕ ΟΗ
 33 ΗΗΝΕΥ[Π]ΑΡΑCΙΤQC ΗΝΕ[ΛΙ]ΤΙΑΗΟC
 34 ΑΥ[ΧΙ]ΩΠΕ ΕΡΕΙΩΖΑΗΗΗC ΕΠΗΟΕΙ
 35 ΗΤΕΥΗΗΤΑCΕΒΗC ΧΕΟΥΗΟΥΟΕΩ
 36 ΩΟΠ ΕΗQΩΟΠ ΔΗ ΗQΠΩΗΡΕ
 37 ΕQΔΘΕΤΕΙ ΔΕ ΗΗΟC ΖΙΤΗΤΕΙCΗΗ
 38 ΧΕΖΗΤΕΖΟΥΕΙΤΕ ΝΕQΩΟΠ
 39 ΗQΠΩΑΧΕ ΑΥΩ ΠΩΑΧΕ ΝΕQΩΟΠ
 40 ΗΗΑΖΗΠΗΟΥΤΕ ΑΥΩ ΝΕΟΥΗΟΥΤΕ ΠΕ

created the earth out of nothing”;^v
 and also, “Who created all these
 things?”^{vi}; and also, “We
 understand that the worlds were
 prepared by the word of God, so
 that what we see was made from
 what does not exist.”^{vii}

In the same way
 Marcion was exposed as not
 understanding that “the law is holy,
 and the commandment is holy and
 just and good”^{viii}
 especially when the Savior said, “If
 you believed Moses, you would
 believe me, for he wrote about
 me,”^{ix} and also, “Search the
 Scriptures because it is they that
 testify on my behalf.”^x

In addition, it is the holy Scriptures
 that exposed the people in Phrygia
 as heretics

when the Holy Spirit descended
 upon the disciples and they gave it
 to the Christians.^{xii}

Also, the Arians
 and their parasites, the Melitians,
 were put to shame when John
 considered their impiety,
 “There is a time when the Word
 was not,”

and rejected it with this saying:
 “In the beginning was the Word,
 and the Word was

^v Isa 40:23.

^{vi} Isa 40:26.

^{vii} Heb 11:3.

^{viii} Rom 7:12.

^{ix} John 5:46.

^x See John 5:39.

^{xi} Elanskaya reads ΤΕΦΥ[CΙ]Α. Lucchesi suggested the reading given here (“Un nouveau complément,” 258), which is certainly correct.

^{xii} See John 20:22–23; Acts 2:2–4; 8:17–18; etc.

41 πωαχε.

42 αλλα πεχαυ ξεαπαυλος

43 χιογνντηντρε εβολ ρηηαποκρυφον

44 εϋχω ημος ξενητενηπεβαλ ηαυ

45 εροογ ηπενααχε σοτηογ

46 ηετηνπογλαε ερραι εχηπηρητ

47 ηρωηε.

48 †ηαογωρ ηαυ ξεπειρωρ

49 παρηνρωηε πε ηρεϋ†[†]ωη.

50 ερεπαυλος συηριστα αν

51 <η>ηεϋωαχε ριτηρηνωαχε αλλα^{xv}

52 ηετχηρ ηε [ρηηε] ρηηεγραφη.

53 ηαι ηενταπαυλος σεγρπεγυογς

54 ερωγη αϋερωαιογ.

55 αγω ογνογα ηαωειηε επαι

56 ριτηηωαχε ηηεπρφηης.

57 ηετχηρ γαρ ρηηεαιας ξεηαλ

58 ηαρωτη ρηηερωογ ετηηαυ

59 εηωαχε ηπχωηηε αγω ηβαλ

60 ηηβαλε ετρηπηκακε ηηηερωοστη

61 ηαηαυ εβολ αγω ηετηηητ[ο]γ

62 ρεαπισ ηηαυ ρηηρωηε σεηασει

63 ηογηοϋ ηαι ηετηηηπεβαλ ηαυ

64 εροογ ηετηηηπενααχε σοτηογ

65 ηπογλαε ερραι εχηπηρητ ηηρωηε.

66 αω γαρ ηογοειω ηταογβαλε η ογλα

67 ρεαπιζε ερωτη η εηα[γ ε]ηηογτε

68 εϋ[οηρ]

with God, and the Word was God.”^{xiii}

26. But he has said that Paul took a testimony from the apocryphal books when he says, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, things that have not arisen upon the human heart.”^{xiv} I will answer him that this stuff is typical of contentious persons. Paul does not support his words through (merely other) words; rather, they are things written in the Scriptures.

It is these (words in the Scriptures) whose meaning Paul gathered and wrote.

And someone can understand this through the words of the prophets. For the things that are written in Isaiah — “The deaf will hear on that day the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind that are in darkness and fog will see, and those who have no hope among people will be filled with joy”^{xvi} — these are “the things that no eye has seen, the things that no ear has heard nor have arisen upon the heart of human beings.”^{xvii}

For when did a blind person or a deaf person hope to hear or to see God [living]

among human beings? Who among those who have no hope could at all think that the Word would become flesh?⁸³ Have the things in God’s heart arisen upon the heart of human beings? When has anyone known his heart?⁸⁴ [. . .]

⁸³ See John 1:14.

⁸⁴ See Rom 11:34.

^{xiii} John 1:1.

^{xiv} 1 Cor 2:9.

^{xv} Elanskaya mistakenly omits a line of text here, reading instead αν ηεϋωαχε αλλα.

^{xvi} Isa 29:18–19.

^{xvii} 1 Cor 2:9.

27. [. . .] Paul [. . .] and “these are the things that he proclaimed” [or “as] he said” [or] “Isaiah charges and says”⁸⁵ and “as David says”⁸⁶ and also “Moses says beforehand”⁸⁷ and again “the Scripture says that Elijah.”⁸⁸ Even when he says, “as it is written,”⁸⁹ and does not make clear where the text is written or who proclaimed it, nevertheless we the readers know where it is written in the Scriptures. This text—“the things that no eye has seen . . .”—we do not find written in the Scripture just as it is. But if it is written⁹⁰ in the apocryphal books, as the heretics say, then those who invented these books stole Paul’s words and wrote it at a later time.

28. Therefore, inasmuch as it is clear that the testimony from the apocryphal books is superfluous because it is unfounded—for the Scripture is perfect in every way—let the teacher teach from the words of Scripture, and let him place before those who desire to learn those things that are appropriate to their age. In the case of those who begin to study as catechumens, it is not right to proclaim the obscure texts of Scripture, because they are mysteries, but instead to place before them the teaching that they need: what will teach them how to hate sin and to abandon idolatry as an abomination, the teaching [. . .]

29. [. . .] is written: [. . .] his neighbor [. . .] in the one whose thought [. . .]

32. [. . .] in the Scriptures. I am satisfied that this will remind you, so that, when you take for yourselves the saints as examples and administer well the words of the holy Scriptures, you will hear sometime, “Well done, good and faithful servant! Because you are trustworthy in small things, I will place you over great things.”⁹¹ I have not written these things as if I were teaching, for I have not attained such a rank. Rather, because I heard that the heretics, especially the wretched Melitians, were boasting about the books that they call “apocryphal,” I thus have informed you of everything that I heard from my father,⁹² as if I were with you and you with me in a single house, that is, “the church of God, the pillar and strength of truth.”⁹³ When we gather in a single place, let us purify it (the church) of every defilement, of double-heartedness, of fighting and childish arrogance. Let us be satisfied with only the Scripture inspired by God to instruct us. Its books we have set forth in the words above: which they are and how many their number. For in this way we

⁸⁵ See Rom 10:20.

⁸⁶ See Rom 4:6; 11:9.

⁸⁷ See Rom 10:19.

⁸⁸ See Rom 11:2.

⁸⁹ Rom 1:17; 2:24; etc.

⁹⁰ Leforts’s text reads *ἐμψυχον* (literally, “if it is alive”). Camplani translates “se poi si trova chiaramente.” My translation suggests that we should read *ἐμψυχον*. In any event, the meaning is clear.

⁹¹ Matt 25:21, 23.

⁹² Bishop Alexander of Alexandria.

⁹³ 1 Tim 3:15.

now celebrate the feast as is fitting, “not with old leaven nor with evil or wicked leaven, but with pure and true leaven.”⁹⁴

33. We will begin the holy Lent on the twenty-fifth of the month of Mechir (19 February), and the great week of the saving Passover on the last of the month of Phamenouth (26 March). And we will finish the holy fast on the fifth of the month of Pharmuthi (31 March). And next we will celebrate the seven weeks of the holy Pentecost, remembering the poor and sharing with one another and with the needy, in accordance with the word of Esdra.⁹⁵ Once and for all we do everything, glorifying God, in accordance with the command of Paul in Christ Jesus our Lord, through whom be glory and power with the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

“Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the brothers and sisters with me greet you.”⁹⁶

I inform you of this as well: that when the blessed Lampon, bishop of Darnei, died, [. . .] was appointed [. . .].

⁹⁴ 1 Cor 5:8.

⁹⁵ 2 Esd (Neh) 8:10.

⁹⁶ Rom 16:16 etc.; Phil 4:21.