

EX | FONTE

Journal of | Ecumenical Studies in Liturgy

VOLUME 5 | 2026

**Coptic Prayer Books in Ottoman Egypt
Overview & Observations on the Collection of
Euchologia of the Monastery of the Syrians**

ARSENIUS MIKHAIL – ARSANY PAUL



exfonte.org

How to Cite

MIKHAIL, Arsenius – PAUL, Arsany, Coptic Prayer Books in Ottoman Egypt. Overview & Observations on the Collection of Euchologia of the Monastery of the Syrians, in: *Ex Fonte – Journal of Ecumenical Studies in Liturgy* 5 (2026) 437–483.

DOI [10.25365/exf-2026-5-15](https://doi.org/10.25365/exf-2026-5-15)

Author

Arsenius Mikhail is Professor of Liturgical Studies at St. Athanasius & St. Cyril Coptic Theological School in California, and invited lecturer in Coptic Liturgy at the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome.

GND [1305414039](#)

ORCID [0000-0003-0855-7332](#)

Arsany Paul is currently a postdoctoral researcher and teaching fellow in the Department of Theology at the University of Notre Dame.

GND [1268364428](#)

ORCID [0009-0005-1495-2509](#)

Abstract

Throughout the medieval and early modern periods, manuscripts of the Bohairic Coptic Euchologion were repeatedly copied to supply monastic, cathedrals, and parishes with the necessary prayer texts for the celebration of the eucharistic liturgy according to the standard Bohairic Northern Egyptian rite. Although the broad features of the Coptic Euchologion have been largely stable at least since its earliest extant witnesses of the 13th century, subtle differences of contents, choices of optional prayers, and other textual features shed light on the diverse scribes and users of these Euchologia across time, geographical regions, and types of communities that used them. As part of the Bohairic Coptic Euchologia Project (BCEP), this article provides a preliminary report on the collection of Bohairic Euchologia housed in the Monastery of the Virgin Mary Al-Suryān in terms of their dates, provenances, and contents. We follow this with observations on certain liturgical features seen across the collection.

Keywords

Coptic Liturgy | Euchologia | Monastery of the Syrians/Dayr al-Suryān | Manuscripts | Ottoman Egypt | Bohairic Coptic | Eucharistic Prayers

Coptic Prayer Books in Ottoman Egypt

Overview & Observations on the Collection of Euchologia of the Monastery of the Syrians

ARSENIUS MIKHAIL – ARSANY PAUL

Throughout the medieval and early modern periods, manuscripts of the Euchologion (Copt. πνευχολογιον; Ar. الخولاجي)¹ were repeatedly copied to supply monastic, cathedral, and parish communities of Coptic Christians with the necessary prayer texts for the celebration of the eucharistic liturgy according to the increasingly standardized Bohairic Northern Egyptian rite.² Modern repositories of Coptic manuscripts in monasteries,

¹ For descriptions of the Coptic Euchologion, see Ugo ZANETTI, Bohairic Liturgical Manuscripts, in: OCP 61 (1995) 65–94; Andrea NICOLOTTI (ed.), Il libro delle anafore della Chiesa copta ortodossa (JThF 45), Münster 2023, 14–23; Arsenius MIKHAIL, A Typology of Bohairic Coptic Euchologia. Introduction to a Project & Preliminary Results, in: Chrysostomos NASSIS et al. (eds.), ΛΟΓΙΚΗ ΛΑΤΡΕΙΑ. Proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of the Society of Oriental Liturgy, Thessaloniki, Greece, 13–18 June 2022 (SECL 6), Münster 2025, 389–404; Arsenius MIKHAIL, The Bohairic Northern Egyptian Euchologion. Description & Outstanding Questions on the Coptic Book of the Liturgies, in: Stefanos ALEXOPOULOS et al. (eds.), Proceedings of the Conference the Liturgies of the Church of Alexandria. From Late-Antique Origins to the Medieval Heritage, 21–23 September 2023, Washington, DC, The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC [forthcoming].

² For the most recent overview of scholarship on the Egyptian/Coptic tradition, see Heinzgerd BRAKMANN, Die Liturgie der Kopten als Spiegelbild der Kirchengeschichte Ägyptens. Der größere Rahmen christlich-ägyptischer Kleinfunde in Würzburg, in: OS 71/2 (2022) 193–227. See also Arsenius

libraries, and museums usually contain several copies of this important prayer book varying in size from small personal manuals to lavish altar copies, as well as in contents from those providing only the most necessary of prayers to plenary Euchologia of all three Coptic eucharistic liturgies (BAS, GREG, and CYRIL) and additional prayers. These Euchologia can be written in the Bohairic dialect of Coptic, in Arabic, or in both languages, with a few attested in Greek and Arabic.³ Although the broad features of the Coptic Euchologion have been largely stable at least since its earliest extant witnesses of the 13th century, subtle differences of contents, choices of optional prayers, and other textual features shed light on the diverse scribes and users of these Euchologia across time, geographical regions, and types of communities that used them.⁴

So far, the large corpus of Bohairic Coptic Euchologia has not been studied in detail, with manuscripts often seen simply as mere copies of a well-established and understood liturgical tradition dating to the early second millennium. This research gap is the object of the *Bohairic Coptic Eu-*

MIKHAIL (ed.), *Guides to the Eucharist in Medieval Egypt. Three Arabic Commentaries on the Coptic Liturgy (CATT 2)*, New York 2022, 19–26.

- ³ For a discussion of the Greek versions of BAS in use among medieval Copts, see Achim BUDDE, *Die ägyptische Basilios-Anaphora. Text – Kommentar – Geschichte (JThF 7)*, Münster 2004, 70–93. Notable examples of the Greek version include the codex *Paris, BnF gr. 325* (14th c.), for which see Heinzgerd BRAKMANN, *Zur Stellung des Parisinus graecus 325 in der Geschichte der alexandrinisch-ägyptischen Liturgie*, in: *Studi sull’Oriente Cristiano 3* (1999) 97–110; and the codex *Kacmarcik Ms 6* known as the *Kacmarcik Codex*: William F. MACOMBER, *The Greek Text of the Coptic Mass and of the Anaphoras of Basil and Gregory according to the Kacmarcik Codex*, in: *OCP 43* (1977) 308–334; William F. MACOMBER, *The Kacmarcik Codex. A 14th Century Greek-Arabic Manuscript of the Coptic Mass*, in: *Le Muséon 88* (1975) 391–395. For a study of later manuscripts of Greek BAS from the Coptic milieu, see Roshdi Wassef Behman DOUS, *Η Αλεξανδρινή Θεία Λειτουργία του Αγίου Μεγάλου Βασιλείου κατά την Κοπτική Παράδοση. Κριτική Έκδοση* [unpubl. dissertation Aristotle University of Thessaloniki], 1997.
- ⁴ On the diversity of celebrant prayers with attention to the Euchologion’s regional history, see, Arsany PAUL, *Variable Celebrant Prayers in the Medieval Coptic Eucharistic Tradition. A Bohairic Manuscripts-Based Inventory and Introduction*, in: *Eastern Theological Journal 12/1* (2026) 113–162.

chologia Project (BCEP), conducted by the present authors. This project has as its goal to better understand the typology of this important liturgical book and its evolution across time and space in the late medieval period. The first research season of the project was recently conducted at the ancient Monastery of the Virgin Mary al-Suryān (the Monastery of the Syrians) in Egypt's Western Desert, home to 64 Euchologia in its large manuscript library. In the following pages, we provide a preliminary report on this collection of Bohairic Euchologia in terms of their dates, provenances, and contents. We follow this with observations on certain liturgical features seen across the collection.

1 *The Bohairic Coptic Euchologia Project (BCEP)*

The first goal of the *Bohairic Coptic Euchologia Project* is to provide an online open-access catalogue of the manuscripts of the Bohairic Euchologion preserved in 13 major collections worldwide. The database is currently being expanded, with information from several collections of Euchologia already entered. For each Euchologion manuscript, the catalogue provides content information, codicological information, and metadata such as provenance, names of scribes and patrons, and production date, in addition to digital images when available. Users of the BCEP database will be able to search all its data across parameters of both time and place. The project is generously funded by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*⁵ and is co-hosted at the University of Regensburg Department of Liturgical Studies and the *Project for the Digital Edition of the Coptic Old Testament* (CoptOT) at the Göttingen Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Lower Saxony.⁶

In addition to the database, the project also studies the history of the Bohairic Euchologion and its evolution in time and space. In this regard, it is inspired by intellectual paradigms of regional liturgical history currently being developed and continuously updated within the field of

⁵ DFG Project # 544528191: Digitaler Katalog und historische Analyse der Handschriften der bohairischen koptischen Euchologion. [↗](#)


⁶ See the project site and database: <https://coptot.manuscriptroom.com/web/bohairic-coptic-euchologia-project/home>. [↗](#)

Byzantine liturgical history, first through the pioneering work of André Jacob,⁷ and more recently further refined by Stefano Parenti.⁸ Advanced analysis of Byzantine Euchologia has also been conducted in the context of the *Vienna Euchologia Project* under the direction of Claudia Rapp, with special focus on the social history of the Euchologia's scribes and users. Within this project, meticulous attention to the provenance, contents, and codicology of Byzantine Euchologia is yielding nuanced insights that are only achievable through 1. contextualizing each manuscript in time and place, and 2. a "big data" approach that can enable scholars to draw firm conclusions based on a statistically significant number of witnesses.⁹ For further information on the conceptualization and methodological premise of the BCEP, we refer readers to the initial project overview presented at the Eighth International Congress of the *Society of Oriental Liturgy* held in Thessaloniki in 2022.¹⁰

In September 2023, in the context of the international symposium *The Liturgies of the Church of Alexandria*, held at The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, Arsenius Mikhail explored some broad ques-

⁷ See for example, among his prolific career on Byzantine Euchologia, André JACOB, *Histoire du formulaire grec de la liturgie de saint Jean Chrysostome* [unpubl. dissertation, Université de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve], 1968.

⁸ Cf. Stefano PARENTI, *Towards a Regional History of the Byzantine Euchology of the Sacraments*, in: *EO* 27 (2010) 109–121; ID., *The Cathedral Rite of Constantinople. Evolution of a Local Tradition*, in: *OCP* 77 (2011) 449–469; ID., *L'anafora di Crisostomo. Testo e contesti* (JThF 36), Münster 2020, and most recently: ID., *Storia regionale del rito bizantino*, vol. 1, *Costantinopoli e dintorni* (JThF 47) Münster 2025.

⁹ Cf. Claudia RAPP et al., *Byzantine Prayer Books as Sources for Social History and Daily Life*, in: *JÖB* 67 (2017) 173–211; Claudia RAPP et al., *Das Wiener Euchologien-Projekt. Anlassgebete als Quelle zur Sozial- und Alltagsgeschichte. Drei Fallbeispiele*, in: *Das Mittelalter* 24/2 (2019) 337–369; Markus VINZENT – Claudia RAPP (eds.), *Studia Patristica*, vol. 108: *Papers Presented at the Eighteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies Held in Oxford 2019*, vol. 5: *Euchologia*, Leuven 2021. A relatively updated list of publications is available here: https://www.oeaw.ac.at/fileadmin/Institute/imafo/pdf/forschung/byzanzforschung/VEP_Project_Publications_2022-05.pdf. 

¹⁰ Cf. MIKHAIL, *A Typology of Bohairic Coptic Euchologia*.

tions related to the Euchologion, such as the use of the term Euchologion in the Coptic manuscript tradition, the number and order of eucharistic formularies found in Bohairic Euchologia, the inclusion of sections for the evening/morning daily incense services, and the practice of including ritual rubrics within the eucharistic formularies. These topics were investigated by providing statistics based on a selected sample of 90 Euchologia copied between the 13th and 20th centuries in diverse regions such as Scetis, Old Cairo, and the Red Sea. The results of these initial statistics on such general characteristics show clearly that the Bohairic Euchologion manuscript tradition is far from uniform and that a typology of this important book is much needed.¹¹ Several articles in recent years further demonstrate the importance of the regional paradigm as well as the need to study late-medieval Euchologia more closely. These include a study of the colophons of the Euchologion *Suryān Liturgy 469* (1623 CE) discussed further in this article, which showcased the enduring awareness by this late period of various “centers” of liturgical influence, namely, Scetis, the patriarchate in Cairo, and the Red Sea Monastery of St. Antony.¹² Another two studies focused on the stand-alone occasional prayers of blessing sometimes included in Euchologia manuscripts, providing both an overview of this corpus of prayers as well as detailed analysis of the prayers among them related to sickness and disease.¹³ A future article in this dossier will take up prayers related to food and meals.

Building on this regional paradigm, a study by Arsany Paul examines prayer diversity within the Bohairic eucharistic formularies.¹⁴ Drawing on a corpus of approximately 375 Euchologia from across both Northern and Southern Egypt, also dating from the 13th to the 20th centuries, he identifies 24 alternative prayers for the celebrant across nine liturgical units,

¹¹ Cf. ID., The Bohairic Northern Egyptian Euchologion.

¹² Cf. ID., Center and Periphery in the Coptic Liturgy of Ottoman Egypt. The Colophons of Manuscript Dayr al-Suryān Liturgy 469, in: OCP 90 (2024) 175–190.

¹³ Cf. ID., Occasional Prayers in Bohairic Coptic Euchologia. A Preliminary Overview and Inventory, in: ExF 2 (2023) 337–362; ID., Occasional Prayers Concerning Sickness & Healing in Bohairic Euchologia, in: ExF 3 (2024) 1–38.

¹⁴ Cf. PAUL, Variable Celebrant Prayers.

14 of which are absent from the standard printed edition of 1902.¹⁵ The study shows that many prayers transmitted in manuscript circulation never entered the standardized Euchologion, while others privileged in print were historically marginal, thereby highlighting the enduring regional diversity of Coptic eucharistic practice, the decisive role of scribal selection, and some correlations between individual Euchologion manuscripts.

In this present article, we present a statistical overview and a discussion of liturgical features of the collection of 64 Euchologia catalogued during our stay at the Monastery of the Syrians from 30 August to 10 September 2025. This is the first of what is planned to be a series of such articles investigating several local collections of Coptic Euchologia in search of patterns of evolution of this liturgical book central to Coptic worship practices.

2 The Monastery of the Syrians & its Library

The Coptic monastery commonly known as the *Monastery of the Syrians* (*Dayr al-Suryān*) is one of four ancient and still-thriving monasteries in the area known in English as Scetis and in Arabic as Wādī al-Naṭrūn, along with the monasteries of Saint Macarius, Saint Pishoi, and the Virgin Mary al-Baramūs. Geographically, Wādī al-Naṭrūn is a valley west of the Nile Delta located halfway between Cairo and Alexandria where monastic communities have existed since the 4th century. Thanks to Evelyn White's extensive history of Wādī al-Naṭrūn and more recent summaries by Otto Meinardus and Karel Innemée, a fairly clear picture of the history of the monastery can be summarized.¹⁶ The Monastery of the Syrians was

¹⁵ Cf. 'Abd al-Masīh ṢALĪB, ΠΙΧΩΜ ἸΤΕ ΠΙΕΥΧΟΛΟΓΙΟΝ ΕΘΟΥΑΒ ΕΤΕ ΦΑΙ ΠΙΕ ΠΙΧΩΜ ἸΤΕ ΨΩΜ† ἸΑΝΑΦΟΡΑ ἸΤΕ ΠΙΔΓΙΟC ΒΑCΙΛΙΟC ΝΕΜ ΠΙΔΓΙΟC ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΟC ΝΕΜ ΠΙΔΓΙΟC ΚΥΡΙΛΛΟC ΝΕΜ ΖΑΝΚΕΕΥΧΗ ΕΥΟΥΑΒ, Cairo 1902.

¹⁶ Cf. Hugh G. EVELYN WHITE, *The Monasteries of the Wādī 'N Natrūn*, part 3: *The Architecture and Archaeology*, New York 1933, 167–220; Aelred Cody – Peter GROSSMANN, *Dayr al-Suryan*, in: CCE, vol. 3, 876a–881a. ↗ Otto F. A. MEINARDUS, *Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Desert*, rev. ed, Cairo, 1992, 121–143. For recent reports on the archaeology and conservation work in the monastery, see Karel C. INNEMÉE, *Dayr al-Suryan. New Discoveries*, in: CCE; ↗ ID., *Dayr al-Suryan. 2023 Update of New Discoveries*, in: CCE. ↗

founded in the 6th century when monks from the neighboring Monastery of St. Pishoi separated from their community because of a dispute over the human body of Christ known as the Aphthartodocetist controversy.¹⁷ Namely, those who adhered to the teaching of Severus of Antioch (512–538 CE) that Christ’s body was fully human and therefore corruptible were the original founders of the monastery, which explains its dedication to the Theotokos, the central figure in all incarnational controversies since the 5th century. The main church of the monastery, recently the subject of extensive conservation work, was likely constructed in the wake of the Arab conquest during the papacy of Benjamin I (622–661 CE). A watershed period in the history of the monastery was the early 9th century, when in 819 CE a group of Syriac monks from Tikrit in Iraq settled in the monastery and are said to have built and constructed it. From then on, the monastery has been known as the Monastery of the Syrians and has featured a vibrant multicultural monastic community of Copts, Syrians, and Ethiopians, all united around their non-Chalcedonian faith despite their diverse cultures and ritual practices.

The Syriac presence and influence in the monastery continued down the centuries, though seems to have been in decline by the 15th and 16th centuries, when most of the extant liturgical manuscripts in the monastery’s library were produced.¹⁸ After a period of notable decline, the monastery underwent a renaissance in the 16th and 17th centuries, evident in reconstruction works around the monastery, the production of manuscripts, and most of all in the sending of monks to repopulate the Eastern Desert monasteries of Saint Antony and Saint Paul. Several important abbots, patrons of manuscripts, and scribes lived in that period, such as the Abbot ‘Abd al-Masīḥ al-Anbīrī (later Abunä Krəstodolu II of Ethiopia) discussed later in this article.

The manuscript library of the monastery is naturally part of the monastery’s broader history. It is impressive in its sheer size of more than

¹⁷ For a brief definition of Aphthartodocetism in the context of post-Chalcedonian Christological debates, see Timothy E. GREGORY, Aphthartodocetism, in: Alexander P. KAZHDAN et al (eds.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 1, Oxford, 1991, 129.

¹⁸ Cf. CODY – GROSSMANN, *Dayr al-Suryan*, 877b.

1,000 Coptic and Arabic manuscripts, making it the largest among the monasteries of Wādī al-Naṭrūn. The collection of Coptic and Arabic manuscripts has been the subject of a long-term cataloguing project funded by grants from the William K. and Marilyn M. Simpson Endowment for Egyptology at Yale University under the direction of Stephen J. Davis.¹⁹ The authors of this article have been members of this project, responsible for cataloguing the liturgical collection of 452 manuscripts and preparing catalogues as part of the project's catalogue series published in *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium's Subsidia* series.²⁰ Consistent with the multilingual character of the monastery's community throughout its history, the library also contains a sizeable collection of 48 Syriac fragments²¹ and a small collection of 24 Ethiopic fragments.²² However, an accurate picture of the size and importance of the monastery's long history of manuscript production and storage must take into account the nu-

¹⁹ Cf. YALE EGYPTOLOGY, Project to Catalogue the Coptic and Arabic MSS at Dayr al-Suryān. [📄](#)

²⁰ Cf. Stephen J. DAVIS, Catalogue of Coptic and Arabic Manuscripts in Dayr al-Suryān, vol. 1: Coptic and Arabic Biblical Texts, Coptic Language Resources Including Biblical Lexica (CSCO 677. Subsidia 139), Leuven 2020; ID., Catalogue of Coptic and Arabic Manuscripts in Dayr al-Suryān, vol. 2: Arabic Commentaries and Canons (CSCO 678. Subsidia 140), Leuven 2021; Stephen J. DAVIS – Mark N. SWANSON, Catalogue of Coptic and Arabic Manuscripts in Dayr al-Suryān, vol. 3: Arabic Theology (CSCO 694. Subsidia 143), Leuven 2022; Stephen J. DAVIS, Catalogue of Coptic and Arabic Manuscripts in Dayr al-Suryān, vol. 4: Arabic Ascetic Discourses (CSCO 697. Subsidia 145), Leuven 2022. The remaining volumes, including volumes 7, 8, and 9 on the liturgical collection are currently under preparation. The authors express their thanks to Stephen Davis for his invitation to participate in this important project and for years of mentorship and training in codicology and cataloguing, which form the basis of the principles utilized in the current project.

²¹ Cf. Sebastian P. BROCK – Lucas VAN ROMPAY, Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts and Fragments in the Library of Deir al-Surian, Wadi al-Natrun (Egypt) (OLA 227), Leuven 2014.

²² Cf. Denis NOSNITSIN – Dorothea REULE, The Ethiopic Manuscripts of the Egyptian Monastery of Dayr as-Suryān. A Catalogue (Supplement to Aethiopica International Journal of Ethiopian and Eritrean Studies 10), Wiesbaden 2021.

merous manuscripts from *Dayr al-Suryān* currently located in European libraries, especially the *British Library* home to the oldest Syriac manuscripts from the monastery as well as one of the oldest extant Bohairic Euchologia, London, *British Library Or. 1239*.²³

3 *The Euchologia of the Monastery of the Syrians*

The collection of Euchologia of *Dayr al-Suryān* consists of 64 codices, divided into two primary categories. The first and largest group is the Euchologion (كتاب الخولاجي), which contains as its principal text one or more of the three Coptic eucharistic formularies—BAS, GREG, and CYRIL. In many cases, these eucharistic formularies are supplemented with additional prayers related to the eucharistic liturgy. This category includes a total of 54 codices.

The second genre consists of a practical manual known as “The Book of Inaudible Prayers” (كتاب الأسرار), an abbreviated codex that primarily preserves the prayers recited in a low voice by the priest, though at times supplemented by supplications pronounced aloud. This category includes ten manuscripts in total. The Book of Inaudible Prayers likely developed for practical and economic considerations, given it contains only selected prayers and is significantly smaller in size, making it less costly to produce and easier to handle.

²³ = Crum 788. Cf. W. E. CRUM, *Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts in the British Museum*, London 1905, 340; BUDDE, *Basilios-Anaphora*, 108 f.; Bigoul EL-SURIANY, *The Manuscript Collection of Deir al-Surian. Its Survival into the Third Millennium*, in: Matt IMMERZEEL – Jacques VAN DER VLIET (eds.), *Coptic Studies on the Threshold of a New Millennium. Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Coptic Studies*, Leiden, 27 August–2 September 2000, vol. 1 (OLA 133), Leuven 2004, 281–294.

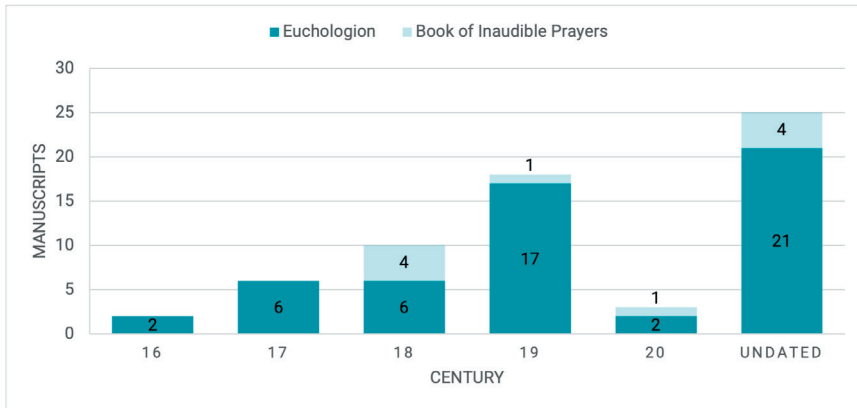


Figure 1: Distribution of the Euchologia and the Book of Inaudible Prayers by century.

In the context of this project, the dating of a manuscript relies on one of two methods: given date or internal evidence. A given date occurs when a scribal colophon explicitly records the date of completion for the work. For instance, John the scribe of Euchologion *Suryān Liturgy 466* provides a date of completion of 1573 CE, which stands as the oldest in this collection. The earliest Book of Inaudible Prayers is *Suryān Liturgy 457*, which the anonymous scribe dates to 1758 CE, placing it roughly two centuries after the earliest Euchologion in the collection.

When no dated colophon is available, internal evidence such as prosopography (when available) was employed to establish a probable date range for the production of the manuscript. If this range spans multiple centuries, the *terminus ad quem* functions as its date for our tables and for statistical purposes. For instance, *Suryān Liturgy 492*, though undated repeatedly references the living patriarch as Gabriel in various prayers, which refers to either Gabriel VII (1525–68 CE) or Gabriel VIII (1587–1603 CE). This evidence situates the manuscript no later than the early 17th century, unless the name was copied verbatim from the manuscript's exemplar. In this case, the manuscript is assigned a date of the 17th century. When no definitive or suggestive markers can be identified to suggest a date, the manuscript was listed as undated. The overall dating curve demonstrates that the 18th and 19th centuries witnessed the great-

est production of both Euchologia and Books of Inaudible Prayers preserved in the collection of *Dayr al-Suryān*.

4 *Scribes and Patrons*

Behind the manuscripts themselves stand many named, and even more unnamed individuals, the persons responsible for commissioning, writing, purchasing, and endowing them to churches and libraries. The collection of Euchologia of the Monastery of the Syrians is no exception, providing us with precious snapshots into the dynamics of book production, the activities of the persons behind these prayer books, and the relationships connecting *Dayr al-Suryān* to other important centers of Coptic Christianity. The following remarks are based on the colophons available in the collection of Euchologia examined during our research stay, with reference made to the broader manuscript library of the monastery when relevant.

As can be expected of a book used mainly by clergy for the performance of the Eucharist, priests and hegumens feature frequently throughout these Euchologia as patrons and owners. Examples where names and clerical status are clearly indicated span the chronological spectrum of the collection and include the hieromonk *Filūṭāʿus*, patron of the Euchologion *Suryān Liturgy 472* (1659 CE); the priest ʿAbd al-Malāk, patron of the Euchologion *Suryān Liturgy 477* (1791 CE); and the priest *Mīḥāʿil*, patron and owner of *Suryān Liturgy 463* (1857 CE), a Book of Inaudible Prayers. Some of the names mentioned are famous hegumens in the monastery’s history, such as ʿAbd al-Masīḥ al-Anbīrī, who endowed the oldest extant Euchologion in the collection *Suryān Liturgy 466* (1573 CE) to the monastery and was the patron of *Suryān Liturgy 469* (1626 CE), and *Yūḥannā al-Fayyūmī*, patron of two Books of Inaudible Prayers, *Suryān Liturgy 459* (1788 CE) and *461* (1795 CE), and perhaps the most ubiquitous name in the entire manuscript library.

Priests and hegumens also functioned as scribes of Euchologia. A notable example is *Yūḥannā al-Fayyūmī* himself, who besides his usual

role of patron and restorer of manuscripts,²⁴ also wrote a Book of Inaudible Prayers, *Suryān Liturgy 458* (1794 CE). Other clergy identified as scribes include the priests Sergius (*Suryān Liturgy 469*), and Ġubriyāl, a priest and monk from the Monastery of Saint Antony who seems to have played an influential role as scribe for several Euchologia in the collection in the 17th century, including *Suryān Liturgy 468* (1601 CE) as well as *Suryān Liturgy 472* and *473*, both dated to 1659 CE.

However, priests were not the only identifiable scribes and patrons of *Suryān* Monastery Euchologia. There are also references to deacons, such as the monk and deacon Yūliyus (Julius) the scribe of the Euchologion *Suryān Liturgy 481* (1751 CE) and the monk and deacon Sulaymān Ġirġis, the scribe of the Book of Inaudible Prayers, *Suryān Liturgy 463* (1857 CE). The most interesting of these deacon scribes is a person by the name of Hibatallah ibn Ġubayr, discussed in more detail below. Identified in other manuscripts in the library as a deacon, he was the scribe of one of the oldest Euchologia in the collection, *Suryān Liturgy 471* (1584 CE) a large volume of the three liturgies and additional Euchologion prayers.

Although one cannot be completely certain, several persons identified as scribes seem to have been laymen. The scribe of the Book of Inaudible Prayers *Suryān Liturgy 463A* identifies himself as Al-Muqaddis Manassa, a term indicating that he once made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The Euchologion *Suryān Liturgy 477* (1791 CE) was written by a person named Ṭāwaḍūrūs Šāliḥ with a modern family name and no indication of clerical or monastic rank. The same may be posited also for Naṣrallah, the scribe of *Suryān Liturgy 503* (1893 CE) and ‘Abd al-Malāk Ḥannā al-Ṭūḥī the scribe of *Suryān Liturgy 505* (1933 CE). As can be perhaps expected, such individuals without an explicit clerical or monastic identity do not appear as patrons of Euchologia but may have been hired as scribes by clergy or have volunteered their time and skill to produce and donate Euchologia.


²⁴ DAVIS, Catalogue, vol. 1, xiv–xv; Bigoul EL-SOURIANY, The Relation between the Fayoum and the Monastery of al-Suryan in the Late Medieval period, in: Gawdat GABRA (ed.), Christianity and Monasticism in the Fayoum Oasis, Cairo 2005, 289–295.

The names of scribes and patrons also help connect the Monastery of the Syrians to other prominent Coptic monasteries, showing that Euchologia were not always local productions by and for the monastery, but brought together the activities of scribes and patrons throughout Egypt. Such connections are discernible in the names of persons from the immediate vicinity of Dayr al-Suryān, such as the priest and monk Yūsuf from the Monastery of Saint Pishoi, one of three successive owners of *Suryān Liturgy* 486. Further afield, the scribal activity of Ġubriyāl mentioned above identifies him as belonging to the Monastery of Saint Antony near the Red Sea in *Suryān Liturgy* 472 and 473 (both dated 1659 CE). This connection to Saint Antony appears again nearly 300 years later, when the monk and Hegumen Yūḥannā al-Samallūṭī from the same monastery is identified as owner of the Euchologion *Suryān Liturgy* 508, dated between 1874 and 1927 based on the mention of Pope Kyrillos V (1874–1927 CE) in prayers for the patriarch. Other cases include the scribe Mīḥāṭīl from the Monastery of the Virgin Mary in Asyūṭ known as Al-Muḥarraq (*Suryān Liturgy* 488, dated to 1871 CE) and the priest Ġirġīs from the Monastery of Saint Paul near the Red Sea, one of several documented owners of *Suryān Liturgy* 507. In one interesting case, the Hegumen Ġubriyāl – perhaps the Antonian scribe mentioned several times so far – is said to have written the Euchologion *Suryān Liturgy* 468 (1601 CE) while staying at the nearby Monastery of Al-Baramūs before it was purchased by Hegumen ‘Abd al-Masīḥ al-Anbīrī for the Monastery of the Syrians, further underscoring the intricate connection between several Coptic monasteries in the early 17th century.

Thus far several names of scribes and patrons have appeared multiple times in the Euchologia collection. We are in fact fortunate that the vast library of the Monastery of the Syrians can greatly enrich our information about some of these key figures, further enhancing our understanding of the scribes, patrons, and users of the Euchologia. The following is only a selective highlight of some names that recur in the Euchologia colophons and what can be known about them from other manuscripts in the library. One of the most prominent names in this collection and in the Coptic Church of the 16th/17th centuries is the Abbot and Hegumen ‘Abd al-Masīḥ al-Anbīrī. From the several colophons and notices in the library it could be established that in 1629/30, Al-Anbīrī was already abbot of the

monastery and had supervised several repairs to manuscripts as well as icons, censers, and buildings throughout the monastery.²⁵ Later in 1648 CE, Al-Anbīrī is identified in an endowment statement in the Euchologion *Suryān Liturgy 468* as “our father the Metropolitan Anbā Aḥristūṭūlū al-Anbīrī, head of the monastery”²⁶. From external sources, we learn that Al-Anbīrī was appointed Metropolitan of Ethiopia as Abunä Krəstodolu II (1664–1671 CE), where he had a turbulent tenure because of internal church conflicts ultimately resulting in his deposition and imprisonment. Despite Ethiopian tradition claiming he remained there until his death, local tradition at Dayr al-Suryān has him return to his monastery, remaining there until his death in 1675/6.²⁷ In addition to his purchase of *Suryān Liturgy 468* in 1623, he is also listed as the patron of *Suryān Liturgy 469* (1626 CE) and the one who endowed *Suryān Liturgy 466* (1573 CE) to the monastery.

But even more prominent than Al-Anbīrī was Hegumen Yūḥannā al-Fayyūmī, another abbot of Dayr al-Suryān from 1796 to 1830.²⁸ No other figure is as strongly represented in colophons of manuscripts throughout the library. Based on the latest statistics from the non-liturgical collection, his name is documented in 40 manuscripts, usually as patron, endower, or restorer. He was also the scribe of at least one manuscript, *Suryān Commentaries 97* (1795 CE).²⁹ Within the liturgical collection, his name ap-

²⁵ The following is based on the timeline reconstructed in MIKHAIL, Center and Periphery, 187 f. See also Emeri VAN DONZEL, Krəstodolu II, in Siegbert UHLIG (ed.), *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, vol. 3, Wiesbaden 2007, 441–442; Salvatore Tedeschi, Ethiopian Prelates, in: CCE 4, 1005a–1044a;  Ute PIETRUSCHKA, Some Observations about the Transmission of Popular Philosophy in Egyptian Monasteries after the Islamic Conquest, in: Damien JANOS (ed.), *Ideas in Motion in Baghdad and Beyond. Philosophical and Theological Exchanges between Christians and Muslims in the Third/Ninth and Fourth/Tenth Centuries (Islamic History and Civilization 124)*, Leiden 2016, 81–108, here: 95.

²⁶ Fol. 148^v: أبنينا المطران أنبا اخرستوطولو الأنبيري الرئيس على الدير.

²⁷ Bishop MATTĀ'US, الأربعون شهيداً عن مخطوطة رقم ٢٦٨ ميامر بمكتبة دير السريان, العامر, Dayr al-Suryān 2005, 35 f.

²⁸ EL-SOURIANY, The Relation between the Fayoum and the Monastery of al-Suryan in the Late Medieval period.

²⁹ Cf. DAVIS, Catalogue, vol. 2, 110 f.

pears in an additional 28 manuscripts in similar capacities of commissioning and restoration. Based on the study by Fr. Bigoul al-Souriany, Yūḥannā likely joined the monastery in the 1770s, where he obtained his scribal and bookbinding skills at the hands of a Hegumen Qulta, also a former abbot. Later, he became superior of the monastery and then abbot, succeeding his master Qulta. While so far, his scribal activity has been thought to consist only of *Suryān Commentaries* 97, the Euchologia collection mentions him as scribe also for the Book of Inaudible Prayers *Suryān Liturgy* 458 (1794 CE), in addition to functioning as patron of two other Euchologia: *Suryān Liturgy* 459 (1788 CE) and *Suryān Liturgy* 461 (1795 CE).

Another scribe already mentioned here is the priest monk Ġubriyāl al-Anṭūnī, the scribe of the three Euchologia *Suryān Liturgy* 468, 472, and 473. His association with the Monastery of Saint Antony is further confirmed in *Suryān Liturgy* 398, a Psalmody book from 1667 CE, and *Suryān Liturgy* 541 a Sunday Lectionary from 1669 CE. While he was clearly active on behalf of Dayr al-Suryān and seems to have stayed for some time in Al-Baramūs Monastery ca. 1601, he was in fact residing in his home Monastery of Saint Antony when he finished producing the Lectionary for Great Lent and the Resurrection period *Suryān Liturgy* 686 in 1669 CE, commissioned for it by Bishop Mīḥāʾīl of Fayyūm to be given to the Monastery of the Syrians.

That a monk like Ġubriyāl would spend time in various posts quite far from his home monastery is by no means unique. This was also the case of another Euchologia scribe, Hegumen Bišāra, the scribe of *Suryān Liturgy* 461 (1795 CE). His activity spanned from 1786 to 1852. Based on the colophon of *Suryān Arabic Biblical* 10 (1848 CE) a Coptic/Arabic manuscript of the Gospels of Luke and John, we learn from his own handwriting that Bišāra served in Alexandria at the time, which seems to have come about near the end of his life after spending years in Dayr al-Suryān, likely involved in manuscript work in association with Yūḥannā al-Fayyūmī. The picture that emerges from this is that our Euchologia scribes were not necessarily cloistered monks working in hermitic isolation producing prayer books solely for their own use and that of their immediate brothers. Instead, they often had interesting and wide-ranging careers, acting as

bridges between various monasteries and centers of Coptic religious culture.

5 *Formularies and Chronological Shifts*

Scribes usually produced manuscripts to meet the concrete liturgical needs of end users. Their selective inclusion or omission of variable prayer texts demonstrates not only their knowledge of the textual liturgical tradition but also their interpretive judgment in discerning which prayers were necessary for the intended user. In this regard, the *Book of Inaudible Prayers* exhibits the least variation. These codices frequently include prayers for the services of the morning and evening offering of incense, and whenever a eucharistic formulary appears in this collection, it is invariably that of BAS, with no provision for GREG or CYRIL.

In contrast to this relatively fixed pattern, Euchologia manuscripts display considerable diversity. They may contain any combination of the following defined principal categories: the formularies of BAS, GREG, and CYRIL; prayers for the vespers and matins offering of incense (V/M), either combined or presented as independent units; a dedicated section of Fraction Prayers (Fractions);³⁰ and the Rite of Filling the Chalice (Chalice Rite).³¹

³⁰ Cf. Ugo ZANETTI, *Inventaire des prières de la fraction de la liturgie copte*, in: Diliana ATANASSOVA – Tinatin CHRONZ (eds.), *ΣΥΝΑΞΙΣ ΚΑΘΟΛΙΚΗ. Beiträge zu Gottesdienst und Geschichte der fünf altkirchlichen Patriarchate für Heinzgerd BRAKMANN zum 70. Geburtstag* (OPOe 6/2), Vienna 2014, 767–800; Epiphanius AL-BARAMŪSĪ, *The Fraction “ΠΙΣΙΝΦΩΩ” in Coptic Liturgy*, in: Arsenius MIKHAIL (ed.), *Proceedings of the 11th International Symposium of the St. Mark Foundation for Coptic Heritage, “The Coptic Liturgy,” Cairo [forthcoming]*.

³¹ This rite is most likely based on a medieval Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts no longer in practice. In its present form, it is utilized in cases where the consecrated wine is spilled during the service or if it is found that the wine used had soured. See Īrīs Ḥabīb AL-MAṢRĪ, *The Rite of the Filling of the Chalice*, in: BSAC 6 (1940) 77–90; Ramez MIKHAIL, *The Coptic Church and the Presanctified Liturgy. The Story of a Rejected Tradition*, in: *Alexandria School Journal* 3 (2016) 2–30; Mīṣā’īl AL-BARAMŪSĪ – Rafīq ‘ĀDIL, *حفظ*

The following heat map table illustrates the frequency of these categories as a percentage by century, with darker shades indicating a higher rate of occurrence relative to the number of manuscripts in that period.

	16 th	17 th	18 th	19 th	20 th	Undated
BAS	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	90%
GREG	100%	17%	33%	18%	50%	24%
CYRIL	100%	17%	33%	0%	0%	19%
V/M	50%	83%	83%	94%	50%	48%
Fractions	100%	33%	100%	82%	100%	43%
Chalice Rite	50%	17%	17%	18%	0%	0%

Figure 2: Heat map reflecting the distribution of major liturgical components.

By far, the most frequently represented eucharistic formulary across the centuries is that of BAS. Although the formularies of GREG and CYRIL are also represented, they appear far less frequently than BAS. CYRIL, in particular, is not attested in 19th- or 20th-century codices in this corpus. Sections for vespers and matins appear most often in manuscripts dated from the 17th to the 19th centuries, while the Rite of Filling the Chalice was relatively less represented in later manuscripts. Independent sections of Fraction prayers are consistently attested throughout the centuries, though as discussed below, the number of prayers included and their order in the manuscript varies considerably.

Fifteen Euchologia preserve one or more eucharistic formularies beyond BAS. After the 18th century, no dated manuscript contains all three liturgies. Before that time, two 16th-century Euchologia (*Suryān Liturgy* 466 and 471), one from the 17th century (*Suryān Liturgy* 468), and two from the 18th century (*Suryān Liturgy* 481 and 477) transmit the full set of three liturgies, along with two undated Euchologia (*Suryān Liturgy* 470 and 483). Other groupings of the anaphoras also appear. Three Euchologia from the 19th century (*Suryān Liturgy* 487, 503, and 496) and two undated Euchologia (*Suryān Liturgy* 506 and 922) include only BAS and GREG, omitting CYRIL, though the latter two manuscripts are incomplete and may once

القربان المقدس وطقس تعمير الكأس, in: Madrasat al-Iskandariyya 21/2 (2016) 123–145.

have contained all three formularies. In *Suryān Liturgy 808*, GREG and CYRIL occur together without BAS, but the codex, consisting of ten loose fragmentary quires, likely contained other material originally.

Later cases feature even further abbreviated contents. For example, *Suryān Liturgy 505* (20th century), preserves only GREG and appears to be fully extant. In contrast, *Suryān Liturgy 475* (undated) is unique in transmitting CYRIL only, yet the codex is incomplete and probably once held additional content. In addition to the manuscripts preserved at the Monastery of the Syrians, another codex now housed in the British Library in London appears to have belonged to the same collection and merits comparison. In his study of BAS, Achim Budde notes that manuscript *British Library Or. 1239* was acquired from the Monastery of the Syrians in the 19th century.³² Beyond this note on the provenance, however, no internal evidence directly links it to that monastic community and thus it is not included in the statistics presented in the present article. The manuscript lacks a dated scribal colophon, and scholars have long debated its dating, suggesting either the 12th or 13th centuries.³³ For the sake of caution, and in line with the stronger scholarly consensus, we assign it to the 13th century. As with the earlier manuscripts of the collection, this codex likewise contains all three anaphoras.

6 *Alternative Prayers*

Beyond the broad analysis of the collection, more nuanced scribal practices emerge when examining specific liturgical units. Two primary types of prayers appear with diverse order, namely, the Prayer of the Kiss, signaling the exchange of the kiss of peace in the pre-anaphora, and the Fraction Prayer, recited after the anaphora during the pre-Communion breaking of the eucharistic bread. A closer study of these prayers and their placement highlights discernible patterns in the evolution of the Euchologia.

³² Cf. BUDDE, *Basilios-Anaphora*, 108 f.

³³ Compare for example the dating in Wadī' AL-FRANSISKĀNĪ, أقدم الترجمات العربية (قرون ١٢-١٤) لفداسات الكنيسة القبطية (2011) 217-235, here: 220 and in BUDDE, *Basilios-Anaphora*, 108-109.

Prayers of the Kiss

By the period under examination, specific Prayers of the Kiss had already become associated with each eucharistic formulary.³⁴ Thus, one can often predict which of the six common Prayers of the Kiss now part of the received tradition will appear in a given formulary.³⁵ Since BAS dominates our sources, the Prayer of the Kiss “O God the great the eternal (ΦΤ ΠΙΝΙΩΤ ΠΩΔ ΕΝΕΖ)”, the primary prayer assigned to BAS, is the most frequently encountered in the collection. The alternative prayer in BAS, “Exalted above every power of speech (CBOCI CA ΠΩΩΠΙ ΝΧΟΜ ΝΙΒΕΝ ΝΤΕ ΟΥCΑΧΙ)”, never appears as the primary prayer in any of the consulted manuscripts. It does, however, occasionally surface as an alternative prayer. For example, among our two 16th-century manuscripts, *Suryān Liturgy 471* includes this second prayer, while *Suryān Liturgy 466* does not. *British Library Or. 1239* retains both prayers, giving first “O God the great the eternal”. Likewise, though most undated codices only include “O God the great the eternal”, *Suryān Liturgy 470*, *483*, and *923* also add the alternative “Exalted above every power of speech”. A unique case occurs in *Suryān Liturgy 469*, which assigns the prayer “O leader of life (ΠΑΡΧΗΓΟC ΝΤΕ ΠΩΝΠ)”, usually associated with CYRIL, to BAS as second in place after “O God the great the eternal”. While such cross-associations are rare, the placement is nonetheless logical since both BAS and CYRIL address the Father.

In a similar fashion, the formulary of GREG follows a predictable order. The Prayer of the Kiss “O you, the Being who exists (ΦΗ ΕΤΩΟΠ ΦΗ ΕΝΔΦΩΟΠ)”, common as the primary Prayer of the Kiss in GREG, usually appears as the sole prayer at this liturgical juncture. This is seen in *Suryān*

³⁴ See prayers E1–8, with hitherto unpublished Prayers of the Kiss, in PAUL, *Variable Celebrant Prayers*.

³⁵ ῢΑΛΙΒ, ΠΙΧΩΜ ΝΤΕ ΠΙΕΥΧΟΛΟΓΙΟΝ ΕΘΟΓΑΒ, 297–304, 458–468, 563–572; NICOLOTTI, *Il libro delle anafore*, 414–421 (§446–454), 560–569 (§657–665), 652–659 (§839–847). For comparison, see Zanetti’s treatment of this liturgical unit in the euchologia from the Monastery of St. Macarius in Ugo ZANETTI, *Esquisse d’une typologie des euchologes coptes bohairiques* in: *Le Muséon* 100 (1987) 407–418, here: 410–411 and more expansively note 34 above.

Liturgy 468 (1601 CE) and *Suryān Liturgy 505* (1933 CE). *British Library Or. 1239* retains this same order as well. When an alternative is included, it is “O Christ our God, the fearful power (ΠΧ̅ϸ ΠΕΝΝΟΥΓ̅† †Χ̅ΩΜ ΕΤΟΙ Ν̅ΞΟ†)”, as evidenced in *Suryān Liturgy 471* (1584 CE) and *Suryān Liturgy 477* (1791 CE). In one unusual case, *Suryān Liturgy 466* (1573 CE) preserves only this latter alternate prayer.

The formulary of CYRIL displays the greatest variety in its arrangement of Prayers of the Kiss. It consistently presents both prayers now regarded as standard: “O leader of life (ΠΑΡΧΗΓΟΣ Ν̅ΤΕ ΠΩΝ̅ϩ)”, and the alternate “O God of love (Φ† Ν̅ΤΕ †Λ̅ΓΑΠΗ)”, except in *Suryān Liturgy 466* (1573 CE), which preserves only the former. All seven other codices with this formulary list both prayers, differing only in the order chosen. *Suryān Liturgy 471* (1584 CE), along with the undated *Suryān Liturgy 470* and *Suryān Liturgy 483*, place the alternate prayer “O God of love” first and “O leader of life” in second place. By contrast, *Suryān Liturgy 468* (1601 CE), *Suryān Liturgy 481* (1751/2 CE) and *Suryān Liturgy 477* (1791/2 CE), as well as the undated *Suryān Liturgy 475*, preserve the reverse order, which is the same order found in the received tradition.³⁶

In other instances, Prayers of the Kiss appear as appendices added outside the eucharistic formularies.³⁷ These may repeat some of the above prayers, or include altogether different ones, as seen in *Suryān Liturgy 496* (before 1895 CE). Unlike the additional alternative Prayers of the Kiss found in the formularies of GREG and CYRIL, *British Library Or. 1239* includes only one prayer per formulary: “O you, the being” for GREG and “O leader of life” for CYRIL. This codex also lacks any appendix of supplementary prayers.

Prayers of the Fraction

Among the most diverse contents of the Euchologia are the Prayers of the Fraction, which appear either within the liturgical formulary or as a sepa-

³⁶ Cf. ṢALĪB, ΠΧ̅ΩΜ Ν̅ΤΕ ΠΕΥΧΟΛΟΓΙΟΝ, 563–572; NICOLOTTI, Il libro delle anafore, 652–659 (§839–847).

³⁷ This is also a feature in the printed editions: ṢALĪB, ΠΧ̅ΩΜ Ν̅ΤΕ ΠΕΥΧΟΛΟΓΙΟΝ, 747–750; NICOLOTTI, Il libro delle anafore, 812–817.

rate block of prayers appended to the Euchologion.³⁸ Since the earliest surviving collections in the 16th century, fixed Fraction Prayers were already associated with each eucharistic formulary. With only a few rare exceptions, the primary Fraction Prayer for BAS is “O Master Lord our God the great (ΦΝΗΒ ΠΟC ΠΕΝΝΟΥΤ ΠΙΝΙΩΤ)” (Zanetti B),³⁹ for GREG it is the prayer “Blessed are you, O Christ (ΚCΜΑΡΩΟΥΤ ΠΙΧΡΙCΤΟC)” (Zanetti G),⁴⁰ and for CYRIL it is the prayer “O God who predestined us to sonship (ΦΤ ΦΗ ΕΤΑΦΕΡΩΟΡΠ ΝΘΑΩΤΕΝ ΕΘΥΜΕΤΩΗΡΙ)” (Zanetti C).⁴¹ In the formularies of GREG and CYRIL, these specific prayers consistently occupy the first position in the manuscript collection. Yet *Suryān Liturgy 496* (before 1895 CE), unusually provides the Fraction Prayer “O God the begetter of light (ΘΕΕ ΦΩΤΟC ΓΕΝΝΗΤΩΡ)” (Zanetti 13) as the only fraction prayer in the Greek formulary of BAS found in the beginning of this eclectic codex.

While these common Fraction Prayers remained the most prevalent within each eucharistic formulary, additional Fraction Prayers were often included, revealing the evolution of this liturgical unit in the context of the collection at Dayr al-Suryān. Formularies of BAS frequently provide two prayers, though in some cases up to three (e. g., *Suryān Liturgy 471, 482, and 494*). One extraordinary instance, *Suryān Liturgy 506*, includes ten fraction prayers within BAS, suggesting a deliberate effort to provide celebrants with a wide range of options. When alternatives are provided, the most common for BAS is “O God the begetter of light,” followed by “Behold Emmanuel our God (ΞΗΠΠΕ ΕΦΧΗ ΝΕΜΑΝ...ΝΧΕ ΕΜΜΑΝΟΥΗΛ ΠΕΝΝΟΥΤ)” (Zanetti 33). In *British Library Or. 1239*, the formulary of BAS preserves the sequence of prayers “O Master Lord our God the great” (Zanetti B) followed by “O God the begetter of light (ΦΤ ΠΙΡΕΦΜΙCΙ ΝΤΕ ΠΙΟΥΩΜΙΝ)” (Zanetti 13).

³⁸ ZANETTI, Inventaire. All numerical references to fraction prayers are based on Zanetti’s inventory.

³⁹ ŞALĪB, ΠΙΧΩΜ ΝΤΕ ΠΙΕΥΧΟΛΟΓΙΟΝ, 388–391; NICOLOTTI, Il libro delle anafore, 496–499 (§597).

⁴⁰ ŞALĪB, ΠΙΧΩΜ ΝΤΕ ΠΙΕΥΧΟΛΟΓΙΟΝ, 530–533; NICOLOTTI, Il libro delle anafore, 628–631 (§807).

⁴¹ ŞALĪB, ΠΙΧΩΜ ΝΤΕ ΠΙΕΥΧΟΛΟΓΙΟΝ, 658–664; NICOLOTTI, Il libro delle anafore, 738–743 (§1021).

In the formulary of CYRIL, two additional prayers frequently occur, such as “O God who spoke with our father Abraham (ϥⲧ ϥⲏ ⲉⲧⲁⲩϥⲁⲗⲓ ⲛⲉⲙ ⲛⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲁⲃⲣⲁⲁⲙ)” (Zanetti 20) and “You have given us the grace of sonship (ⲉⲁⲕⲧ ⲛⲁⲛ ⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲧⲙⲉⲧⲱⲛⲣⲓ)” (Zanetti 3). Both prayers relate to the theme of sonship, already central to CYRIL’s principal Fraction Prayer, “O God who predestined us to sonship”. By contrast, GREG occasionally preserves an alternate Fraction Prayer, though the limited evidence does not allow us to establish a clear frequency. *British Library Or. 1239* preserves only the principal Fraction Prayer assigned to each anaphora, with no supplementary prayers attested.

A notable scribal custom was to collect Fraction Prayers in a separate appendix, either appended to the anaphora or to the entire manuscript. This arrangement required the celebrant to browse away from the formulary and select a prayer from the appendix. The practice is remarkably widespread: 36 of the 54 Euchologia in this collection contain an independent section of Fraction Prayers. The number of prayers included varies considerably – from as few as two (e. g., *Suryān Liturgy 808*) to expansive and distinctive compilations with upwards of 25 in the case of *Suryān Liturgy 496*. Such evidence indicates that scribes not only preserved traditional prayers but also sought to enrich the liturgical repertoire with additional ones evolving over time.

Across the collection, the number of distinct Fraction Prayers steadily increased over time, reflecting a continuous process of adaptation and expansion. The following table lists all Fraction Prayers in the collection and their frequency by century, arranged in order of their highest total occurrence. These statistics also include the four fraction prayers found in two Books of Inaudible Prayers, marked with an asterisk.

Fraction Prayer	16 th	17 th	18 th	19 th	20 th	Undated	Total
O Master Lord our God the great, the eternal (Zanetti B)	2	6	8	17	1	16	50
For you are God the merciful (Zanetti 4)		1	3	13	3*	8	28
O God who granted us sinners the foreordained salvation (Zanetti 1)	1	1	4	14	1	7	28
O Master Lord...who through his Cross descended into Hades (Zanetti 9)		2*	5	7	1	9	24
O Master Lord our God the Creator (Zanetti 2)	1	2	4*	9	2	4	22
Behold Emmanuel our God (Zanetti 33)	2	3	3	5	1*	4	18
O God the begetter of light (Zanetti 13)	1		3	4		7	15
Blessed are you O Christ (Zanetti G)	2	1	2	4	1	4	14
O Lord our Lord how wonderful is your name (Zanetti 6)	1		4	2	1	5	13
O God who spoke with our father Abraham (Zanetti 20)	1	1	2	3		3	10
O Christ our God who has come as high priest of the good things (Zanetti 8)				5	1	3	9
O Master Lord...who sent his only begotten Son into the world (Zanetti 5)		1	3	2	1	2	9

O God who predestined us to sonship (Zanetti C)	2	1	2		3	8	
O God of gods and Lord of lords (Zanetti 21)			2	3	2	7	
You gave us the grace of sonship (Zanetti 3)	1		2	1	3	7	
O Master Lord our God the Creator (Zanetti 42)			1	1	4	6	
O Master Lord...who suffered by his will in the flesh (Zanetti 18)	1	1	1	3		6	
For you are the Logos of God the Father (Zanetti 14)	1			1	1	2	5
O Jesus Christ of the salvific name (Zanetti 7)				1	1	3	5
O our Master Lord God the commander of light (Zanetti 23)	1		2	1			4
O God who created all things through his wisdom alone (Zanetti 19)			2	1	1		4
O Lord our God the great the eternal and whose name is great (Zanetti 15)	1		1	1		1	4
O God of the ancient blessing (Zanetti 25)			2	1			3
And it happened in the days in which God wished to test Abraham (Zanetti 16)				1	1		2

O God the Father of our Lord...who has manifested this great mystery (Zanetti 30)	1	1		2
O God the great and holy who is veiled in his glory (Zanetti 55)			1 1	2
O Lamb of God who through your sufferings you bore the sins of the world (Zanetti 50)			1 1	2
O Master Lord...of the name that is great and exalted above all names (Zanetti 47)	1	1		2
O Master Lord God of all comfort and Lord of mercy (Zanetti 24)	1	1		2
O Master Lord God...we thank you for everything...for you have permitted (Zanetti 29)	1	1		2
O the being who existed (Zanetti 56)			2	2
Thus, truly the Logos of God suffered in the flesh (Zanetti 17)			1 1	2
We thank you O Lord God (Zanetti 38)	1	1		2
You are he with whom we have laid our lives (Zanetti 45)	1	1		2
O Master Lord God...who has given us an altar (Zanetti 44)	1	1		2
Behold Emmanuel our God (Zanetti 12)			1	1

O God of our fathers		1	1
O Master Lord, God of our fathers	1		1
O God the provider for everyone		1	1
We praise and glorify the God of gods and the Lord of lords (Zanetti 11)		1	1

Table 1: Distribution and frequency of Fraction Prayers.

The data in the table above shows the following general trends. While in the 16th and 17th centuries only 18 distinct fraction prayers are attested across eight manuscripts, by the 18th century the number rises to 27 across six manuscripts. This growth reflects both creativity and continuity: some prayers appear for the first time, while others are reworkings of earlier prayers of this genre, forming revised but recognizable redactions. For instance, the prayer “O God who spoke with our father Abraham” (Zanetti 20), already present in the earliest specimens, is commonly prescribed for the Liturgy of Great Thursday. Although it is widely transmitted, by the 19th century an alternate prayer, “And it happened in the days in which God wished to test Abraham (ΔΕΥΩΠΙ ΔΕ ΉΕΝ ΝΙΕΖΟΥΥ ΕΤΑ ΦΤ ΟΥΩΥ ΕΕΡΠΙΡΑΖΙΝ ΝΑΒΡΑΔΑΜ)” (Zanetti 16) began to circulate, albeit with much lower frequency, reflecting a gradual change in the prayer assigned for that liturgical feast. Another example reflects reworking of earlier known Fraction Prayers: “O Master Lord our God the Creator” (Zanetti 2), is attested in the earliest manuscripts and occurs across all centuries of the collection for a total of 22 occurrences. In contrast, the later variant “O Master Lord our God the Creator” (Zanetti 42) emerges only in the 18th century and remains comparatively rare, with only six attestations between the 18th and 20th centuries, including undated codices.

Fraction Prayers also constitute an integral component of the Rite for Filling the Chalice. Ugo Zanetti has already noted the relative stability of the prayer “O Master Lord ... who suffered by his will in the flesh (ΦΗΝΒ ΠΟϚ ... ΦΗ ΕΤΑΦΟΙΜΚΑΖ ΉΕΝ ΠΕΦΟΥΩΥ ΉΕΝ ΤΣΑΡΖ)” (Zanetti 18), a

prayer attested in all the manuscripts within our corpus containing this rite, as well as a less prevalent alternative not found in our collection, “O God who has nourished us unto eternal life (ϥ† ϥΗ ἔΓΑϩΩΔΑΝΩ ἸΜΜΟΝ ἘΟΥΩΝϩ ἸἔΝἔϩ)” (Zanetti 46).⁴²

Taken together, this evidence highlights both the stability of certain “authoritative” Fraction Prayers and the gradual expansion of the corpus over time. The tension between preservation and innovation illustrates the role of scribes in shaping the repertoire available for liturgical celebration through their selective inclusion of certain prayers and not others. Finally, it also demonstrates that what one collection regards as standard prayers may vary across manuscripts preserved in different repositories.

A Distinct Euchological Case Study

Manuscripts *Suryān Liturgy 472* (1659 CE) and *Suryān Liturgy 473* (1659 CE) offer a rare glimpse into scribal practices and the deliberate choices made in selecting prayers. What makes these two 17th-century Euchologia particularly distinctive is that both were produced by the same scribe, Ġubriyāl a monk-priest of the Monastery of Saint Antony in Egypt’s Eastern Desert. Both codices were completed in 1659 CE, with *Suryān Liturgy 472* completed roughly two months before *Suryān Liturgy 473*. Each manuscript identifies patrons from the Monastery of the Syrians: *Suryān Liturgy 472* was first owned by Filūṭā’us and later by Yūḥannā, while *Suryān Liturgy 473* belonged to Sulaymān, all three serving as monk-priests of that monastery.

Despite being the works of the same scribe in the same year in the same monastery, the two codices diverge in their arrangement and selection of variable prayers. These BAS-only Euchologia include also the rites of vespers and matins placed at the end of the codex. Yet their order differs: in *Suryān Liturgy 472*, Ġubriyāl transcribed vespers first followed by matins, whereas in *Suryān Liturgy 473* the sequence is reversed. Examining the inclusion of certain prayers in these two Euchologia underscores the considerable autonomy scribes exercised in their work. Both manuscripts include a single Prayer of the Kiss, namely, “O God the great the eternal” in the formulary of BAS. However, the Fraction Prayers display

⁴² Cf. ZANETTI, *Inventaire*, 772 f.

significant variety. *Suryān Liturgy 472* contains two: “O Master Lord our God the great” (Zanetti B), followed by “Behold Emmanuel our God” (Zanetti 33). In contrast, *Suryān Liturgy 473* preserves only the former. More subtle yet equally significant differences emerge in the commemoration of the saints, a list of saints recited by the priest in the context of the anaphoral intercessions. When compared across the two Euchologia, the commemoration of BAS displays significant differences. *Suryān Liturgy 473* expands the list of saints considerably, adding a series of patriarchs, both Alexandrian and otherwise, alongside references to the first three ecumenical councils and several additional ascetics (explored further below) – amounting to about 15 more saints than those named in *Suryān Liturgy 472*.

This evidence raises an important point. The same scribe, working in the same year, at the same monastery produced manuscripts that differ in prayers, structure, and commemorations. Scribes were not mere copyists, passively reproducing fixed texts. Rather, Euchologia were subject to personalization, whether determined by the scribe’s judgment or the patron’s request. The difficulty lies in discerning whose hand guided these choices. Since both patrons belonged to the same monastic community and lived in the same period, it is improbable that such differences represent distinct liturgical traditions. Economic factors may have also influenced these variations. Perhaps a wealthier patron could afford a more extensive inclusion of prayers, as seen in *Suryān Liturgy 472*, while another received a codex distinguished instead by its expanded commemoration of saints, as in *Suryān Liturgy 473*. In either case, each codex was a unique product, consistent with the broader Bohairic tradition, yet including subtle differences.

Ultimately, the contrast between *Suryān Liturgy 472* and *Suryān Liturgy 473* underscores the fluidity of liturgical manuscripts. Even within a single monastery and under the hand of the same scribe, variation was not only possible but likely expected. This case study highlights how Euchologia functioned as living documents, tailored to patrons and communities, reflecting a dynamic interplay between tradition, scribal agency, and the economic and devotional priorities of liturgical life.

7 *The Local Veneration of Saints*

Besides major structural differences and the choice of alternate prayers, the Euchologia of Dayr al-Suryān can be differentiated on a finer scale in terms of a key textual unit, namely, the saints invoked in the formularies of BAS, GREG, and CYRIL in the context of the commemoration of the saints mentioned above, as well as in dismissal blessings often written after the commemoration of saints or at the end of vespers, matins, and/or the eucharistic liturgy. The first of these, the commemoration of saints, is by far the most textually developed with the addition of numerous saints, especially in the formulary of BAS, where the number of saints included in the received text of Ṣalīb's Euchologion reaches 80.⁴³ The commemoration is essentially a list of saints venerated by the Coptic Church, including biblical figures like the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, Stephen Protomartyr, and the Apostle Mark; 4th/5th-century bishops like Athanasius, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria and others; the first three ecumenical councils; and important monastic fathers such as Antony, Paul, and Macarius. Within the liturgical formularies, the prayer appears in the context of the anaphoral intercessions, either after the consecratory epiclesis prayer in the case of the Antiochene-style anaphoras of BAS and GREG or before the Sanctus in the Alexandrian anaphora of CYRIL. While in BAS the list is introduced as a response to a command by Christ to commemorate the saints, the equivalent text in GREG and CYRIL is introduced simply as a prayer for their repose. On the other hand, dismissal blessings list saints either as categories or individually, asking for their prayers and supplications at the end of liturgical services, or inexplicably in Euchologia both print and manuscripts, after the end of the commemoration of saints. Taken together, these two types of prayers – commemoration and dismissal blessings—have proven to be highly malleable through the addition of numerous saints, greatly distinguishing individual Euchologia even within the same collection.

For the sake of clarity, the commemoration of saints can be divided into three categories based on its length and number of saints: brief,

⁴³ Cf. BUDDE, *Basilios-Anaphora*, 492–495; ṢALĪB, ΠΙΧΩΜ ἸΤΕ ΠΙΕΥΧΟΛΟΓΙΟΝ, 352–361; NICOLOTTI, *Il libro delle anafore*, 468–475 (§565).

middle, and extended. These categories align to a degree with chronological development, with the brief commemoration more common in Euchologia older than ca. 15th century and the extended version more common in younger manuscripts, though this is by no means consistent. The earliest known witness of the brief commemoration can be seen in *British Library Or. 1239* (13th c.), an Euchologion purchased from Dayr al-Suryān and one of the oldest extant Bohairic Euchologia anywhere. Here, the commemoration of BAS lists only the following names organized by category:

1. The Virgin Mary
2. John the Baptist, Stephen Protomartyr, and the Apostle Mark
3. Severus of Antioch
4. Authors of the Liturgies: Cyril of Alexandria, Basil of Caesarea, and Gregory the Theologian
5. Monastic fathers: Antony the Great, Paul of Thebes, the three Saints Macarius (i. e. Macarius the Great, Macarius of Tkoou, and Macarius of Alexandria)

Among Euchologia currently located at the Monastery of the Syrians, similarly brief versions of the commemoration are quite rare, appearing only in three cases. First is the BAS-only Euchologion *Suryān Liturgy 465* (1745 CE) that adds the following to the list above: Dioscorus, Athanasius, Peter of Alexandria, John Chrysostom, Gregory the Armenian, Gregory (Thaumaturgus?), and the three ecumenical councils of Nicaea, Ephesus, and Constantinople. Although this list is certainly expanded relative to that of *British Library Or. 1239*, it is nonetheless notably brief compared to the received text, which also includes the Alexandrian patriarchs Theodosius, Theophilus, and Demetrius, the monastic fathers John the Little and Pishoi, and numerous other monks down to the 14th century. Similarly, the undated three-liturgic Euchologion *Suryān Liturgy 470* features a brief commemoration in BAS, adding only Dioscorus, John Chrysostom, John the Little, Pishoi, and the “Roman fathers” in reference to Maximus and Domitius. Absent is any reference to the ecumenical councils, most early Church Fathers, or the host of monastic saints found in the received text. While this Euchologion lacks an explicit date, its visual appearance and handwriting is generally consistent with 13th/14th-century Euchologia known from other collections. The final case is *Suryān Liturgy 475*, an un-

dated Euchologion containing only the formulary of CYRIL. It is usually the case, even in the received tradition, to find brief versions of the commemoration in GREG and CYRIL, an archaic feature consistent with the less frequent use of these formularies. In this case in particular, the commemoration is even more brief than the equivalent one in BAS of *British Library Or. 1239*, lacking Paul of Thebes.

Three Euchologia in the collection feature a more developed commemoration in BAS, which can be categorized as medium in length. The Euchologion of ‘Abd al-Masīḥ Ṣalīb itself acknowledges in a footnote that at that time in the early 20th century, many priests only read the names up to Archimandrite Shenoute and his disciple Besa. The Euchologion *Suryān Liturgy 481* (1751 CE) is highly consistent with this description. It reaches up to Besa, omitting only the patriarchs Peter, Theodosius, Theophilus, and Demetrius, the bishops Basil of Caesarea, Gregory Thaumaturgus, and a few monastic saints such as Paul of Tamma and his disciple Ezekiel, Isidore the Presbyter, and Theodore the disciple of Pachomius, before finally adding the 14th-century Old Cairo hermit Barsūm the Naked. The exact text of this medium-length commemoration occurs also in *Suryān Liturgy 479* (1718–1852 CE), an Euchologion with no indication of date other than naming the current patriarch Peter, likely in reference to Peter VI (1718–1726 CE) or Peter VII (1809–1852 CE). The final witness is the BAS-only Euchologion *Suryān Liturgy 504* (1894 CE), reproducing the received text exactly but only up to Abba Pishoi.

Yet, it would be a mistake to assume that the medium and extended commemorations developed only after the 18th century. In fact, the majority of *Suryān* Euchologia otherwise transmit the fully expanded version of the commemoration in BAS, including numerous other monastic saints down to the 14th century, such as Abba Ruways, Marqus al-Anṭūnī, and Barsūm the Naked. Some of these Euchologia are the oldest in the collection, such as *Suryān Liturgy 466* (1573 CE), *468* (1601 CE), *469* (1626 CE), *472* and *473* (1659 CE), and *474* (1666 CE). Nor is the addition of monastic saints necessarily the final phase in the development of the commemoration. In a few cases, the commemoration features such an emphasis on monastic saints while omitting earlier fathers. One such example is *Suryān Liturgy 492* (1525–1603 CE), a BAS-only Euchologion commemorating the incumbent patriarch Gabriel, referring to either Gabriel VII (1525–68 CE)

or Gabriel VIII (1587–1603 CE). While desert fathers are included, beginning from Antony and Macarius and including Pachomius, Shenoute, Samuel the Confessor, Onuphrius, and even Ruways and Barsūm the Naked, the text omits Athanasius, Peter, John Chrysostom, Theodosius, Theophilus, Demetrius, the Gregorys Thaumaturgus and the Armenian, and the three ecumenical councils. A similar commemoration appears in *Suryān Liturgy 502* (17th/19th c.). *Suryān Liturgy 471* (1584 CE) includes only Severus, Cyril, Basil, and Gregory among early Church Fathers, while omitting the ecumenical councils and adding Maximus and Domitius, the forty-nine martyrs of Scetis, and Abba Moses, Shenoute, and Pachomius. Finally, even the modern volume *Suryān Liturgy 505* (1933 CE) presents the same commemoration as *Suryān Liturgy 471*, adding to it only Abba Onuphrius and Samuel the Confessor.

Our final set of observations regarding the commemoration of saints relate to finer details that depart from the received printed text of BAS. Already in his study of BAS, Budde has noted a few Euchologia that include atypical names, such as Patriarch Timothy found in 5 of Budde's Bohairic Euchologia base,⁴⁴ and Theophanes seen only in one Greek witness, *St. Macarius Monastery Liturgy 155* (1894 CE). Both names are attested in Euchologia of Dayr al-Suryān. The ambiguous Theophanes is included in the commemoration of *Suryān Liturgy 462* between Theophilus and Peter of Alexandria. Patriarch Timothy is mentioned in several Euchologia: *Suryān Liturgy 489* (1881 CE), *490* (1809–52 CE), *494* (1800/1 CE), and the undated Euchologia *Suryān Liturgy 491*, *495*, and *498*. Another set of names worth noting are the Syriac fathers, Ephrem, Barsauma, and Marutha of Tikrit. All three are included in the received standard text, which naturally drew upon existing manuscripts and actual practice in Wādī al-Naṭrūn. Within Suryān Monastery Euchologia, Ephrem the Syrian is the most common of the three, appearing in 33 Euchologia, Barsauma is included in 34, while Marutha of Tikrit in 20 Euchologia. Faced with such prominent Syriac fathers standing out among an otherwise large group of

⁴⁴ See BUDDE, *Basilios-Anaphora*, 492 f. Timothy is attested in Budde's sample in *Coptic Patriarchate Liturgy 173* (1593 CE), *BAV Vatican Copt.* 99 (1718–1726 CE), *Abnūb St. Mīnā Monastery Liturgy 1* (18th c.), *Coptic Patriarchate Liturgy 177* (1898 CE), and *Muḥarraḡ Monastery Liturgy 13* (19th c.).

saints who led monastic lives in Egypt, one cannot help but wonder if their inclusion in the formulary of BAS took place first in the Monastery of the Syrians before spreading elsewhere. It should be noted that both Ephrem and Barsauma are included in the oldest Euchologion in the collection, *Suryān Liturgy 466* (1573 CE), while Marutha appears first in *Suryān Liturgy 473* (1659 CE) with the majority of instances appearing in the 18th century and later.

Other minor features may point to traditions of veneration local to Scetis likely reflecting earlier phases of the development of the formulary of BAS and its commemoration prior to the extant Euchologia. While the received text in the majority of manuscripts privileges Antony the Great as the first monastic father immediately after the three ecumenical councils, a small minority assigns first place to Macarius the Great, the local founding father of Scetiotite monasticism. This is seen only in the formulary of GREG in *British Library Or. 1239*, but is also encountered in other Euchologia in this collection. One of them is from the late-16th century, *Suryān Liturgy 471* (1584 CE), in addition to three others without a known date: *Suryān Liturgy 483*, 922, and 923. The persistence of this minor feature favoring Macarius over Antony is especially interesting given that the Monastery of Saint Antony near the Red Sea had risen to ecclesiastical prominence already in the 13th century, effectively outpacing the monasteries of Scetis as the center of Coptic ecclesiastical influence and prestige, so much so that a colophon in the Euchologion *Suryān Liturgy 469* (1626 CE) invokes the ritual authority of the Red Sea monastery in matters of proper liturgical celebration.⁴⁵ These historical dynamics between Scetis and the Red Sea would seem to suggest that the privileging of Abba Macarius in some Scetis Euchologia after the 13th century was in fact a relic of earlier Scetis tradition that had managed to escape the updating hands of scribes and users. It could also represent an attempt to re-assert the importance of Macarius to Scetis and to Coptic monasticism generally at a later point in history.

A final pair of variants from the standard text may also be indicative of regional differences between Scetis and the Red Sea traditions that ultimately did not make it to Ṣalīb's Euchologion. The first and more ubiqui-

⁴⁵ Cf. MIKHAIL, Center and Periphery.

tous of the two is the description of Abba Pishoi as the one “who washed the feet of our good Savior (ΦΗ ΕΤΑΦΙΩΙ ἸΝΕΝΣΑΛΛΑΧΞ ἸΤΕ ΠΕΝΣΩΤΗΡ ἸΑΓΑΘΟΣ)”, an appellation that differs from Ṣalīb’s “the beloved of our good Savior (ΠΙΜΕΝΡΙΤ ἸΤΕ ΠΕΝΣΩΤΗΡ ἸΑΓΑΘΟΣ)”⁴⁶, attested in 28 Euchologia in Dayr al-Suryān. The phrase is also found in three of Budde’s Euchologia, *Vatican Copt.* 99 (1718–26 CE), *Coptic Patriarchate Liturgy* 211 (1828 CE), and *Coptic Patriarchate Liturgy* 177 (1898 CE). At least the two Patriarchate manuscripts can be confidently traced to the Monastery of Saint Antony based on the provenances of their scribes, while Budde tentatively assigns the Vatican Euchologion also to the same region. While more confident conclusions can only be drawn after examining other Euchologia collections during our project, we can suggest at this juncture that the non-standard phrasing may have originated in the Red Sea monasteries, appearing in some Scetis Euchologia under the influence of the Antonian strand of the Bohairic Liturgy but ultimately not featuring in Ṣalīb’s landmark Euchologion that has become the modern standard of the Coptic Liturgy.

The opposite may be true of another rare phrase. According to monastic tradition, John the Little is known for watering a dry piece of wood for three years in obedience to his teacher Abba Pambo until it sprouted and became known as the Tree of Obedience.⁴⁷ While in the received text of BAS he is simply identified as “Our father Abba John the Hegumen (ΠΕΝΙΩΤ ΔΒΒΑ ΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ ΠΙΖΗΓΟΥΜΕΝΟΣ)”, an alternate appellation appears in a few Scetis Euchologia describing him as “our father Abba John of the fruitful tree (ΠΕΝΙΩΤ ΔΒΒΑ ΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ ΦΑ ΠΙΩΩΗΝ ἸΡΕΦ†ΚΑΡΠΟΣ)”. The latter is rather rare, appearing in only seven Suryān Euchologia, the earliest being *Suryān Liturgy* 494 (1800/1 CE),⁴⁸ though it also features in Euchologia from the Monastery of Saint Macarius as we will discuss in a future article. So far, this textual feature is not associated with any known

⁴⁶ ṢALĪB, ΠΙΧΩΜ ἸΤΕ ΠΙΕΧΟΛΟΓΙΟΝ, 356; NICOLOTTI, *Il libro delle anafore*, 470 (§565); BUDDÉ, *Basilios-Anaphora*, 185.

⁴⁷ For the tradition and its sources, see Hugh G. EVELYN WHITE, *The Monasteries of the Wādī ’N Natrūn*, part 2: *The History of the Monasteries of Nitria and of Scetis*, New York 1932, 108.

⁴⁸ *Suryān Liturgy* 489 (1881 CE), 490 (1809–52 CE), 494 (1800/1 CE), and 504 (1894 CE), and the undated Euchologia *Suryān Liturgy* 491, 495, and 498.

Antonian Euchologia and may be a feature of the local veneration of John the Little and the tradition surrounding the Tree of Obedience.

8 *Conclusions*

The collection of Euchologia and Books of Silent Prayers of Dayr al-Suryān is one of the largest and oldest among the monasteries of Wādī al-Naṭrūn. While the collection contains two Euchologia dated to the 16th century, most of the collection dates from the 17th century and later, with the largest proportion produced in the 19th century. The scribes, patrons, and users of these prayer books tended to be hegumens and priests of Dayr al-Suryān, though interesting exceptions demonstrate that the monastery did not exist in isolation from other monastic communities and the broader Coptic community. More specifically, the phenomenon of itinerant scribes such as Ġubriyāl al-Anṭūnī, who could produce Euchologia away from Dayr al-Suryān or endow them to the monastery after production complicates efforts to identify the provenance of prayer texts and liturgical features of a given book.

As can be expected of Coptic liturgical practice by this period, the eucharistic formulary of BAS dominates the collection. Both GREG and CYRIL decline from the 17th century on, appearing only sporadically or not at all, with no Euchologion containing all three formularies after the late-18th century. With regard to individual Euchologion prayers, the Prayers of the Kiss found in the Suryān collection follow a pattern broadly consistent with the received print tradition with only a minor exception. In the formulary of CYRIL, one witness (*Suryān Liturgy* 466) includes only the prayer “O God of love (ϥⲧⲏⲧⲉ ⲧⲁⲒⲁⲛⲏ)”, assigned second place in modern editions, while three Euchologia (*Suryān Liturgy* 470, 471, and 483) reverse the typical order of the prayers of the kiss in CYRIL, favoring “O God of love” as the primary prayer text. This phenomenon is consistent with the overall low preservation of CYRIL both as a copied text and in actual usage, which seems to have secured it a level of diversity in its alternate prayers compared to the more frequently used and therefore standardized formulary of BAS.

Finally, certain textual patterns and features may be useful in comparison to future collections to be studied in the context of our project.

Eighteen Fraction Prayers are encountered in the earliest Euchologia of the collection dated to the 16th and 17th centuries, with eight appearing across both centuries. Excluding from both numbers the standard BAS Fraction Prayer (Zanetti B), there remain numerous Fraction Prayers that are strongly represented in the oldest Euchologia of Dayr al-Suryān, most notably the prayer “Behold Emmanuel our God” (Zanetti 33) found in a total of 5 out of 8 Euchologia from the 16th and 17th centuries. Certain patterns emerge also in analyzing the Commemoration of Saints, namely the frequent inclusion of the Syriac fathers Ephrem, Barsauma, and Marutha, the identification of John the Little as “the one of the fruitful tree”, and the prioritizing of Macarius the Great before Antony in a handful of Euchologia. As we move forward with the *Bohairic Coptic Euchologia Project* (BCEP), it will be of interest to determine whether such features and frequencies are consistent across the Euchologion manuscript tradition or whether we are indeed before local features of liturgical practice in Dayr al-Suryān specifically or Wādī al-Naṭrūn more broadly.

Appendix

The following table lists the manuscripts of the Euchologion and Book of Inaudible Prayers in the collection of Dayr al-Suryān in chronological order by their library shelfmarks and their distinct ID in the Bohairic Coptic Euchologia Project database (BOE #). The table also reflects the content sections included in each manuscript, namely, BAS, GREG, CYRIL, vespers/matins (V/M); Fraction Prayers; and the Rite of Filling the Chalice (Filling the Chalice). When discernible, either by explicit mention or by prosopography, the provenance of the manuscript is given.

Century	Shelfmark	BOE	Date	BAS	GREG	CYRIL	V/M	Fraction	Chalice Rite	Provenance
Euchologia										
16th	466	207	1573	X	X	X	X	X	X	Suryān
	471	297	1584	X	X	X		X		
17th	468	209	1601	X	X	X		X	X	Baramūs
	469	210	1626	X			X			Suryān
	472	212	1659	X			X			Suryān
	473	213	1659	X			X			Suryān
	474	214	1666	X			X			Suryān
	492	232	1525–1603	X			X	X		
18th	465	206	1745	X			X	X		
	485	225	1784	X			X	X		
	482	222	1786	X			X	X		
	680	299	1790	X			X	X		
	481	221	1751–1752	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	477	217	1791–1792	X	X	X	X	X		
19th	493	233	1800	X			X	X		
	484	224	1841	X			X	X		
	487	227	1868	X	X		X	X		

Century	Shelfmark	BOE	Date	BAS	GREG	CYRIL	V/M	Fraction	Chalice Rite	Provenance
19 th	488	228	1871	X			X	X		
	467	208	1872	X			X	X		
	489	229	1881	X			X	X		
	500	240	1886	X			X			
	712	250	1886	X			X	X		
	503	243	1893	X	X		X	X	X	
	504	244	1894	X			X			
	502	242	1603–1809	X			X	X		
	479	219	1718–1852	X			X	X		
	507	246	1718–1852	X			X	X		
	494	234	1800–1801	X			X			
	480	220	1809–1852	X			X	X		
	490	230	1809–1852	X			X	X	X	
	496	236	before 1895	X	X			X	X	
20 th	505	245	1933		X			X		
	508	247	1874–1927				X	X		
Undated	462	203	Undated	X						
	470	211	Undated	X	X	X				

Century	Shelfmark	BOE	Date	BAS	GREG	CYRIL	V/M	Fraction	Chalice Rite	Provenance
Undated	475	215	Undated			X				
	476	216	Undated	X				X		
	478	218	Undated	X			X	X		
	483	223	Undated	X	X	X				
	486	226	Undated	X			X	X		
	491	231	Undated	X			X	X		
	495	235	Undated	X			X	X		
	497	237	Undated	X			X			
	498	238	Undated	X			X	X		
	499	239	Undated	X			X			
	501	241	Undated	X			X	X		
	506	298	Undated	X	X			X		
	808	300	Undated		X	X		X		
	838	301	Undated	X						
	891	302	Undated	X						
	920	303	Undated	X						
	922	304	Undated	X	X		X			
	923	305	Undated	X			X			
	924	306	Undated	X						

Century	Shelfmark	BOE	Date	BAS	GREG	CYRIL	V/M	Fraction	Chalice Rite	Provenance
Book of Inaudible Prayers										
18th	457	198	1758	X			X	X		
	459	200	1788				X			Jerusalem
	458	199	1794	X			X			Suryān
	461	202	1795				X			Suryān
19th	463	204	1857	X			X		Suryān	
20th	460	201	1944	X			X			
Undated	463A	205	Undated	X			X			
	513	249	Undated	X						
	725	251	Undated				X			
	729	252	Undated	X			X			

Table 2: The collection of Euchologia and Book of Inaudible Prayers at Dayr al-Suryān.

Abbreviations

BAS	The Liturgy of Basil of Caesarea
BSAC	Bulletin de la Société d'archéologie copte
CATT	Christian Arabic Texts in Translation
CCE	The Claremont Coptic Encyclopedia
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
CYRIL	The Liturgy of Cyril of Alexandria
ExF	Ex Fonte – Journal of Ecumenical Studies in Liturgy
EO	Ecclesia orans
GREG	The Liturgy of Gregory of Nazianzus
JÖB	Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik
JThF	Jerusalem Theologisches Forum
OCP	Orientalia Christiana Periodica
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
OPOe	Orientalia – Patristica – Oecumenica
OS	Ostkirchliche Studien
SECL	Studies in Eastern Christian Liturgies

Bibliography

All hyperlinks were accessed on December 15, 2025.

Manuscript Sources (other than Suryān Euchologia)

- Abnūb St. Mīnā Monastery Liturgy 1*
BAV, Vatican Copt. 99
Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate Liturgy 173
Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate Liturgy 177
Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate Liturgy 211
Kacmarcik Ms 6
London British Library Or. 1239
Muḥarraḡ Monastery Liturgy 13
Paris, BnF Gr. 325

St. Macarius Monastery Liturgy 155

Suryān Arabic Biblical 10

Suryān Commentaries 97

Suryān Liturgy 398

Suryān Liturgy 541

Suryān Liturgy 686

Primary Sources

NICOLOTTI, Andrea (ed.), *Il libro delle anafore della Chiesa copta ortodossa* (JThF 45), Münster 2023.

ṢALĪB, ‘Abd al-Masīḥ, ΠΙΧΩΜ ἸΤΕ ΠΙΕΥΧΟΛΟΓΙΟΝ ΕΘΟΥΑΒ ΕΤΕ ΦΑΙ ΠΕ ΠΙΧΩΜ ἸΤΕ †ΩΜ† ἸΑΝΑΦΟΡΑ ἸΤΕ ΠΑΓΙΟΣ ΒΑCΙΛΙΟΣ ΝΕΜ ΠΑΓΙΟΣ ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΟΣ ΝΕΜ ΠΑΓΙΟΣ ΚΥΡΙΛΛΟΣ ΝΕΜ ΖΑΝΚΕΕΥΧΗ ΕΥΟΥΑΒ, Cairo 1902.

Secondary Sources

AL-BARAMŪSĪ, Epiphanius, The Fraction “ΠΙΧΙΝΦΩΩ” in Coptic Liturgy, in: Arsenius MIKHAIL (ed.), *Proceedings of the 11th International Symposium of the St. Mark Foundation for Coptic Heritage, “The Coptic Liturgy,”* Cairo [forthcoming].

AL-BARAMŪSĪ, Mīṣā’īl – ‘ĀDIL, Rafīq, *حفظ القربان المقدس وطقس تعمير الكأس*, in: *Madrasat al-Iskandariyya* 21/2 (2016) 123–145.

AL-FRANSISKĀNĪ, Wadī’, *أقدم الترجمات العربية (قرون ١٢–١٤) لقداسات الكنيسة القبطية*, in: *Madrasat al-Iskandariyya* 7 (2011) 217–235.




AL-MAṢRĪ, Īrīs Ḥabīb, The Rite of the Filling of the Chalice, in: *BSAC* 6 (1940) 77–90.

BRAKMANN, Heinzgerd, Die Liturgie der Kopten als Spiegelbild der Kirchengeschichte Ägyptens. Der größere Rahmen christlich-ägyptischer Kleinfunde in Würzburg, in: *OS* 71/2 (2022) 193–227.

–, Zur Stellung des Parisinus graecus 325 in der Geschichte der alexandrinisch-ägyptischen Liturgie, in: *Studi sull’Oriente Cristiano* 3 (1999) 97–110.

BROCK, Sebastian P. – Lucas VAN ROMPAY, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts and Fragments in the Library of Deir al-Surian, Wadi al-Natrun (Egypt)* (OLA 227), Leuven 2014.

BUDDE, Achim, *Die ägyptische Basilios-Anaphora. Text – Kommentar – Geschichte* (JThF 7), Münster 2004.

- CODY, Aelred – Peter GROSSMANN, Dayr al-Suryan, in: CCE, vol. 3, 876a–881a, <https://ccdl.claremont.edu/digital/collection/cce/id/709/rec/12>. 
- CRUM, W. E., Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts in the British Museum, London 1905.
- DAVIS, Stephen J., Catalogue of Coptic and Arabic Manuscripts in Dayr al-Suryān, vol. 1: Coptic and Arabic Biblical Texts, Coptic Language Resources Including Biblical Lexica (CSCO 677. Subsidia 139), Leuven 2020.
- , Catalogue of Coptic and Arabic Manuscripts in Dayr al-Suryān, vol. 2: Arabic Commentaries and Canons (CSCO 678. Subsidia 140), Leuven 2021.
- , Catalogue of Coptic and Arabic Manuscripts in Dayr al-Suryān, vol. 4: Arabic Ascetic Discourses (CSCO 697. Subsidia 145), Leuven 2022.
- DAVIS, Stephen J. – SWANSON, Mark N., Catalogue of Coptic and Arabic Manuscripts in Dayr al-Suryān, vol. 3: Arabic Theology (CSCO 694. Subsidia 143), Leuven 2022.
- DOUS, Roshdi Wassef Behman, Η Αλεξανδρινή Θεία Λειτουργία του Αγίου Μεγάλου Βασιλείου κατά την Κοπτική Παράδοση. Κριτική Έκδοση [unpubl. dissertation Aristotle University of Thessaloniki], 1997.
- EL-SURIANY, Bigoul, The Manuscript Collection of Deir al-Surian. Its Survival into the Third Millennium, in: Matt IMMERZEEL – Jacques VAN DER VLIET (eds.), Coptic Studies on the Threshold of a New Millennium. Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Coptic Studies, Leiden, 27 August – 2 September 2000, vol. 1 (OLA 133), Leuven 2004, 281–294.
- , The Relation between the Fayoum and the Monastery of al-Suryan in the Late Medieval period, in: Gawdat GABRA (ed.), Christianity and Monasticism in the Fayoum Oasis, Cairo 2005, 289–295.
- EVELYN WHITE, Hugh G., The Monasteries of the Wâdi 'N Natrûn, part 2: The History of the Monasteries of Nitria and of Scetis, New York 1932.
- , The Monasteries of the Wâdi 'N Natrûn, part 3: The Architecture and Archaeology, New York 1933.
- GREGORY, Timothy E., Aphthartocetism, in: Alexander P. KAZHDAN et al. (eds.), The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium, vol. 1, Oxford 1991, 129.
- INNEMÉE, Karel C., Dayr al-Suryan. New Discoveries, in: CCE. URL: <https://ccdl.claremont.edu/digital/collection/cce/id/2137/rec/2>. 
- , Dayr al-Suryan. 2023 Update of New Discoveries, in: CCE. URL: <https://ccdl.claremont.edu/digital/collection/cce/id/2185/rec/1>. 

- JACOB, André, *Histoire du formulaire grec de la liturgie de saint Jean Chrysostome* [unpubl. dissertation, Université de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve], 1968.
- MACOMBER, William F., *The Greek Text of the Coptic Mass and of the Anaphoras of Basil and Gregory according to the Kacmarcik Codex*, in: OCP 43 (1977) 308–334.
- , *The Kacmarcik Codex. A 14th Century Greek-Arabic Manuscript of the Coptic Mass*, in: *Le Muséon* 88 (1975) 391–395.
- MATTĀ'US, Bishop, *الأربعون شهيدًا عن مخطوطة رقم ٢٦٨ ميامر بمتكبة دير السريان العامر*, Dayr al-Suryān 2005.
- MEINARDUS, Otto F. A., *Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Desert*, rev. ed., Cairo 1992.
- MIKHAIL, Arsenius, *The Bohairic Northern Egyptian Euchologion. Description & Outstanding Questions on the Coptic Book of the Liturgies*, in: Stefanos ALEXOPOULOS et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the Conference the Liturgies of the Church of Alexandria. From Late-Antique Origins to the Medieval Heritage*, 21–23 September 2023, Washington DC, The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC [forthcoming].
- , *Center and Periphery in the Coptic Liturgy of Ottoman Egypt. The Colophons of Manuscript Dayr al-Suryān Liturgy 469*, in: OCP 90 (2024) 175–190. DOI: 10.2143/OCP.90.1.3293759. [↗](#)
- , *Guides to the Eucharist in Medieval Egypt. Three Arabic Commentaries on the Coptic Liturgy (CATT 2)*, New York 2022.
- , *Occasional Prayers in Bohairic Coptic Euchologia. A Preliminary Overview and Inventory*, in: ExF 2 (2023) 337–362.
- , *Occasional Prayers Concerning Sickness & Healing in Bohairic Euchologia*, in: ExF 3 (2024) 1–38.
- , *A Typology of Bohairic Coptic Euchologia. Introduction to a Project & Preliminary Results*, in: Chrysostomos NASSIS et al. (eds.), *ΛΟΓΙΚΗ ΛΑΤΡΕΙΑ. Proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of the Society of Oriental Liturgy*, Thessaloniki, Greece, 13–18 June 2022 (SECL 6), Münster 2025, 389–404.
- MIKHAIL, Ramez, *The Coptic Church and the Presanctified Liturgy. The Story of a Rejected Tradition*, in: *Alexandria School Journal* 3 (2016) 2–30.
- NOSNITSIN, Denis – REULE, Dorothea, *The Ethiopic Manuscripts of the Egyptian Monastery of Dayr as-Suryān. A Catalogue (Supplement to Aethiopica International Journal of Ethiopian and Eritrean Studies 10)*, Wiesbaden 2021.

- PARENTI, Stefano, *L'anafora di Crisostomo. Testo e contesti* (JThF 36), Münster 2020.
- , *The Cathedral Rite of Constantinople. Evolution of a Local Tradition*, in: OCP 77 (2011) 449–469.
- , *Storia regionale del rito bizantino, vol. 1: Costantinopoli e dintorni* (JThF 47), Münster 2025.
- , *Towards a Regional History of the Byzantine Euchology of the Sacraments*, in: EO 27 (2010) 109–121.
- PAUL, Arsany, *Variable Celebrant Prayers in the Medieval Coptic Eucharistic Tradition: A Bohairic Manuscripts-Based Inventory and Introduction*, in: *Eastern Theological Journal* 12/1 (2026) 113–162.
- PIETRUSCHKA, Ute, *Some Observations about the Transmission of Popular Philosophy in Egyptian Monasteries after the Islamic Conquest*, in: Damien JANOS (ed.), *Ideas in Motion in Baghdad and Beyond. Philosophical and Theological Exchanges between Christians and Muslims in the Third/Ninth and Fourth/Tenth Centuries* (*Islamic History and Civilization* 124), Leiden 2016, 81–108.
- RAPP, Claudia et al., *Byzantine Prayer Books as Sources for Social History and Daily Life*, in: JÖB 67 (2017) 173–211.
- , *Das Wiener Euchologien-Projekt. Anlassgebete als Quelle zur Sozial- und Alltagsgeschichte. Drei Fallbeispiele*, in: *Das Mittelalter* 24/2 (2019) 337–369.
- TEDESCHI, Salvatore, *Ethiopian Prelates*, in: CCE 4, 1005a–1044a. URL: <https://ccd.claremont.edu/digital/collection/cce/id/851/rec/9>. 
- VAN DONZEL, Emeri, *Kræstodolu II*, in: Siegbert UHLIG (ed.), *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, vol. 3, Wiesbaden 2007, 441–442.
- VINZENT, Markus – CLAUDIA Rapp (eds.), *Studia Patristica, vol. 108: Papers Presented at the Eighteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies Held in Oxford 2019, vol. 5: Euchologia*, Leuven 2021.
- ZANETTI, Ugo, *Bohairic Liturgical Manuscripts*, in: OCP 61 (1995) 65–94.
- , *Inventaire des prières de la fraction de la liturgie copte*, in: Diliana ATANASSOVA – Tinatin CHRONZ (eds.), *ԳՆԱՋԻԿ ԿԱԹՈՒԼԻԿԻ*. Beiträge zu Gottesdienst und Geschichte der fünf altkirchlichen Patriarchate für Heinzgerd BRAKMANN zum 70. Geburtstag (OPOe 6/2), Vienna 2014, 767–800.
- , *Esquisse d'une typologie des euchologes coptes bohaïriques*, in: *Le Muséon* 100 (1987) 407–418.