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The current editorial address for the *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* is:

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- Abbreviations for editions of papyri, ostraca, and tablets should follow the *Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets* (<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/clist.html>). The volume number of the edition should be included in Arabic numerals: e.g., *P.Oxy.* 41.2943.1-3; 2968.5; *P.Lond.* 2.293.9-10 (p.187).
- Other abbreviations should follow those of the *American Journal of Archaeology* and the *Transactions of the American Philological Association*.
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- For general matters of style, contributors should consult the 15th edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* or this issue of *BASP*.

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John Wallrodt and Andrew Connor provided assistance with the production of this volume.

Caroline T. Schroeder, *Monastic Bodies: Discipline and Salvation in Shenoute of Atripe*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007. 237 pages. ISBN 0-8122-3990-3.

This is an important book. Interest in the writings of the fifth-century Upper Egyptian ascetic Shenoute has increased considerably in recent years as a result of the clarity brought to the manuscript tradition by Stephen Emmel's 1993 Yale University dissertation on *Shenoute's Literary Corpus*, subsequently published by Peeters in two volumes under the same title in 2004 (CSCO Subsidia 111-112). Organized into nine *Canons* and eight *Discourses*, Shenoute's immense literary output offers investigators direct access into the working world of a late antique coenobitic monastery. While the corpus survives incomplete, what remains offers tantalizing evidence of the practices and struggles of the community both within its walls and beyond. Schroeder's monograph is only the second one published since J. Leipoldt's 1903 *Shenute von Atripe und die Entstehung des national ägyptischen Christentums*, and it moves beyond R. Krawiec's *Shenoute and the Women of the White Monastery* (2002) in its effort to identify and illuminate the unique nature of Shenoute's ascetic ideology and situate it within the broader context of Upper Egyptian monasticism.

Schroeder examines Shenoute's ideology of the communal ascetic life through a well thought out and methodologically sophisticated lens. For Shenoute, bodily asceticism extends beyond the efforts of the individual monk to incorporate the communal body of the monastery as a whole, represented both by the sum of its individual members and by its physical buildings. Shenoute's rise to power within the White Monastery followed his vigorous challenge to the current leader's authority. Shenoute interpreted his predecessor's lack of discipline and leniency towards certain monks as a threat to the community's integrity and its individual members' salvation. His ascetic ideology, which grew out of this early experience, drew on biblical notions of community and purity. Ascetic discipline served to purify the individual's monastic body, which together with the other purified bodies of the community's individual members purified the monastery or social body as a whole. Sin, understood as pollution, in turn threatened not only the individual ascetic, but also the community. As in ancient Israel, the individual's favor with God (and salvation) depended not only on his or her own purity, but on the purity of the community as a whole. The purity of the social body must therefore be guarded lest the pollution of one member spread like a disease, corrupting the monastic body and threatening the salvation of every individual.

Schroeder's organization and the clarity of her prose allow easy access to her thesis. The volume includes an extensive introduction, four well-composed chapters, a brief conclusion, extensive notes, a bibliography, and a useful index. Schroeder begins by introducing the reader to Shenoute and his place in the broader landscape of early Christian asceticism. The introduction also outlines the methodological approach and intended scope of the study. The first chapter, "Bodily Discipline and Monastic Authority: Shenoute's Earliest Letters to the Monastery," explores the initial development of Shenoute's ideology in the period of his conflict with his immediate predecessor. Schroeder's cautious and judicious interpretation of these early letters illuminates the origins of the ideology and outlines its basic components. The second chapter, "The Ritualizing of the Monastic Body: Shenoute's Rules," focuses on the subsequent institutionalizing of the ideology through the rules Shenoute imposed on his monastic federation. It offers a fascinating study of the rules, illustrating their underlying foundation in Shenoute's ideology of purity and pollution. A particularly important aspect of this chapter lies in its revelation of the unique nature of Shenoute's ideology when viewed against that of the nearby Pachomian monastic federation. Expulsion, for example, which was rare in the Pachomian community, became a frequent form of punishment in Shenoute's monasteries, a necessity called forth by the desire to maintain the purity of the corporate monastic body. The intriguing third chapter, "The Church Building as Symbol of Ascetic Renunciation," explores Shenoute's incorporation of the major new basilica in his monastery and its surrounding buildings into his ideology of the body. The interior and exterior of the church correspond in Shenoute's discourse with the general duality that equates interiority with the spirit and exteriority with matter. Thus "the purity and holiness of the church depend upon the people who gather within it. Polluting activities sever the monastery from the body of Christ and drive God out of the church" (p. 108). The methodological sophistication of the chapter is striking, and its evidence underscores the totalizing nature of the ideology of purity and pollution in Shenoute's thought. The final chapter, "Defending the Sanctity of the Body: Shenoute on the Resurrection," integrates Shenoute's ascetic ideology with his defense of Alexandrian orthodoxy. For Shenoute, the desire to purify the body drew on the positive understanding of the body as created by God and shared by his incarnate Son. The conclusion briefly reiterates the major points of the study and raises questions for further research and discussion.

The importance of this volume lies not least in its challenge to the commonly held view of Coptic Christianity as theologically derivative and uncreative. Shenoute emerges in this study as a creative theological thinker. His ideology of the communal ascetic life integrates biblical notions of prophecy,

purity, pollution, and sin into a complex and multifaceted program that weaves together varied layers of the “body:” the body of the individual monk, the social or corporate monastic body, the body of the church (interior and exterior), and the body of Christ. Similarly the author strikes new and important ground in uncovering the unique nature of Shenoute’s ideology over against that of the nearby and better known (outside of Egypt, at least) Pachomian federation. No longer can Shenoute’s monastic federation be understood as an offshoot or copy of the earlier Pachomian experiment. While it may have borrowed ideas and shared certain goals, it emerges in Schroeder’s study as a unique experiment, once again exposing the general tendency to oversimplify the past. Schroeder’s analysis of this difference has already begun to impact the study of Egyptian monasticism.

Forgotten and often ignored in the west, Shenoute emerges here as a figure to remember. This volume offers a superb introduction to him and his writings, and in the process opens the door to rethinking the origins and development of asceticism in Egypt. It is a must for libraries and serious students of Egyptian monasticism and Egyptian Christianity, as well as for those interested more generally in asceticism, concepts of the body, and sin.

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