

THE FUNCTION AND IDENTITY OF THE STEWARD «ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ» A LINGUISTIC ANALYTICAL STUDY OF COPTIC DOCUMENTS

BY

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ABSTRACT

[AR] وظيفة وهوية الوكيل «الإيكونوموس»: دراسة تحليلية لغوية للوثائق القبطية
تعتبر دراسة الوثائق القبطية من أهم المصادر التي يمكن الإعتماد عليها في التعرف على ملامح الحياة اليومية للأقباط. وقد ذخرت الوثائق القبطية بكثير من النصوص التي توثق وتوضح ماهية «الإيكونوموس»، لذا يقدم هذا البحث دراسة شاملة لهذا المصطلح الذي يعنى الوكيل، والذي يمكن وصفه بدقة على أنه لقب وظيفي لأحد رجال الدين الذي يقوم بمجموعة من الأعمال الديرية والكنسية الهامة. وقد أوضح البحث أن مسؤوليات الوكيل كثيرة ومتنوعة وتتمثل في كونه مسؤول مالى وإدارى كبير يقوم بكافة المعاملات المالية والإدارية المتعلقة بموارد وممتلكات الدير، كما كان له دور دينى كبير، فضلاً عن مسؤوليته كأمين الخزانة، ذلك بالإضافة إلى عقد دراسة مقارنة بين مفهوم ووظيفة هذا اللقب منذ بداية ظهوره في الوثائق القبطية وتطوره مع مرور الزمن. وأخيراً يهدف البحث إلى رسم تصور لأحد جوانب الحياة الرهبانية والتعرف على الأنشطة الكنسية التي كانت تمارس ومن ثم إلقاء الضوء على كيفية إدارة وتنظيم الأقباط للأديرة والكنائس في الفترة ما بين القرن الخامس حتى القرن الحادي عشر الميلادى.

[EN] The study of Coptic documents is considered as one of the most important sources that can be relied upon to give a glimpse into the Copts' daily life. The Coptic documents are replete with many texts that document and clarify the identity of the «ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ», so this research presents a comprehensive study of this term which means steward. This can be accurately described as the job title for a clergyman who performs a number of important monastic and ecclesiastical tasks. The research explained that the responsibilities of the steward were many and varied, namely a high financial and administrative officer who performed all financial and administrative transactions related to the resources and properties of the monastery and he also had a great religious role, as well as his responsibility as treasurer. This is in addition to conducting a comparative study between the concept and function of this title since the beginning of its appearance in Coptic documents and its development over time. Finally, the research aims to draw a perception of one of the aspects of monastic life, identify the ecclesiastical activities that were practiced and then shed light on how the Copts managed and organized monasteries and churches in the 5th century AD until the 11th century AD.

KEYWORDS: steward, church, monastery, responsibilities, administration role, financial role, religious role, treasurer.

I. INTRODUCTION

At the outset, it should be noted that all the documents in this research have been previously published and the majority of them are from Thebes. Some studies dealt with this title from a historical point of view, contrary to what is dealt with in this research, where it relies mainly on Coptic documents in its methodology. These studies are:

The article written by Benaissa Amin on abishop, a village, and the nomination of a church *Steward*¹ is a Greek document dating back to the 5th century AD. Sheds light on the relationship between bishop and villages and the nomination of a church Steward.

The study by Ewa Wipszycka on *Les ressources et les activités économiques des églises en Égypte du IV^e au VIII^e siècle*² is church's economical affairs, which mentioned part of the steward's role in the management but without dealing with the Coptic documents.

The study by Georg Schmelz, *Kirchliche Amtsträger im spätantiken Ägypten nach den Aussagen der griechischen und koptischen Papyri und Ostraka*³ contains a chapter on bishops, priests and deacons in economic life. It must be noted that this study is based mainly on Greek documents.

The research methodology follows the linguistic and civilization analysis of all Coptic documents related to the steward, in addition to study this function historically in order that it can be more readily known by specialists. The research is divided into five parts.

The first part defines the term ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ. The second one explains how the steward in the monasteries is appointed and specifies the nature and levels of this job. The third part is devoted to the various responsibilities of the steward, while the fourth one shows the evolution of the concept and function of ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ. The fifth part attempts to determine the most famous Copts who held this position. Finally, the research will present the most important results.

II. THE TERM ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ

ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ is a title among various titles employed in Greek and Coptic sources. It is generally translated in specialized dictionaries as «steward»⁴, and is of Greek origin «οἰκονόμος»⁵. In fact, the title ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ cannot be considered among the honorary routine monastic titles but is perceived as a function, which is represented by a very important and precise ecclesiastical and monastic functionary. This function was known from the Greek era⁶ which represented a subordinate state official in charge of the serapeum, also of a high financial officer⁷. As for the presence of the steward in monasteries and churches is declared obligatory by Canon 26 of the council of Chalcedon of 451 AD, which decided that any church that has a bishop would also have a steward from the clergy of that church⁸, he will have to administer the goods of the

¹ BENAÏSSA 2009: 175–180.

² WIPSYCKA 1972: 135–141.

³ SCHMELZ 2002: 163–164.

⁴ SOPHOCLES 1900: 796; *FD* 2002: 563.

⁵ LIDDELL & SCOTT 1986: 2683.

⁶ Oxyrhynchus is one of the richest archaeological sites for Greek papyri and a very large number of texts relating to church officials. SCHMELZ 2002: 7.

⁷ LIDDELL & SCOTT 1986: 2683.

⁸ The steward was responsible to the bishop, and all of his belongings served as a guarantee for any losses.

church under the direction of his bishop⁹. And we find an accurate depiction of the relationship between the steward and the bishop in the canons of Athanasius¹⁰ mentioned that the steward should do nought without the bishop and also likewise the bishop shall do nought without the steward «ετρε ποικονομος δε ζωωq ηνεqrλaay ηzωb ajm πεπισκοπος οyδε ηνεπε πισκοποςrλaay ηzωb ajm ποικονομος»¹¹. So that the administration of the church is not without witnesses and that the ecclesiastical goods are not dissipated, but in Egyptian churches the oldest mentions¹² of οικονομος is well attested already in date back to the 4th century AD¹³, despite this. By studying the Coptic documents, it becomes clear that this title did not appear in any document dated before the 5th century AD, while it is mentioned in lots of documents that are confirmed dating from the beginning of the 5th century AD until the 11th century AD¹⁴. It was noticed that the great bulk of these documents fall in the period including 7th & 8th centuries. It refers that this function became great and fundamental importance in the Egyptian churches and monasteries during this period. It should be noted that the title or function of οικονομος was restricted to men only, as no document was found indicating that a woman had this title or performed any of its functions, as for linguistic aspect, the Copts wrote this title¹⁵ usually after the names in many forms in their documents, as follows: εγενομος, εγενωμος, εγηνομος, εγωνομος¹⁶, εικονομος¹⁷, εικωνομος¹⁸, εκενομος¹⁹, εκονιομος²⁰, εκονομος²¹, εκονοηνομος²², εκωνομος²³, εκωνωμος²⁴, εκωνωμωος²⁵, ηκονομος²⁶,

⁹ WIPSZYCKA 1972: 135.

¹⁰ WIPSZYCKA 2018: 10.

¹¹ CRUM 1904: 97.

¹² One of these mentions is transmitted to us concerns a steward of the Episcopal church of Saint Pachomius.

¹³ WIPSZYCKA 1972: 135.

¹⁴ This means that it was known in the Islamic period, and undoubtedly, this title was reserved for Copts only. It is not found in Arabic names.

¹⁵ There are many linguistic derivation of this title for example:

-οικονομια, noun means administration « τεροικονομια γαρ οyατcmοτ τε », see: <http://data.copticscriptorium.org/texts/proclushomilies/proclus-homily-23-on-the-nativity-in-budge-ed/analytic> Accessed on 5/06/2022.

-οικονομει, verb means control « εκοικονομει ηνεκωαξε », see:

<http://data.copticscriptorium.org/texts/pachomiusinstructions/instructions-of-apa-pachomius-in-mercator-in-budge-ed-part-2/analytic> Accessed on 5/06/2022.

¹⁶ KRU 1912: N^o. 18,92.

¹⁷ LANTSCHOOT: 1959, N^o. lix, lxxiv.

¹⁸ WS 1922: N^o. 97,192.

¹⁹ KRU 1912: N^o.107.

²⁰ LANTSCHOOT 1959, N^o. lxxvi, this written form is not mentioned in specialized dictionaries.

²¹ CPR 1958: vol.4, N^o.153.

²² KRAUSE 1958: N^o.4.

²³ KOW 1960: N^o.294.

²⁴ BROWNE 1984: N^o.204.

²⁵ QUIBELL 1912: N^o.261.

²⁶ WS 1922: N^o.181.

ΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ²⁷, ΙΟΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ²⁸, ΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ²⁹, ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΥ³⁰, ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΥΣ³¹, ΟΙΚΟΙΝΟΜΟΣ³², ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ³³, ΟΙΚΟΝ^ΟΜΟΣ³⁴, ΟΙΚ³⁵, ΟΙΚΟ³⁶, ΟΙΚΟΜΟΣ, ΟΙΚΟΥΝΟΜΟΣ³⁷, ΟΙΚΩΝΟΜΟΥ³⁸ ΟΙΧΟΝΟΜΟΣ³⁹, ΩΙΚ⁴⁰, ΩΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ⁴¹, ΩΚΩΝΟΜΟΣ⁴². With it was mentioned that the Coptic equivalent of this term is ρμνη⁴³, but in fact the Copts used only the word ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ to express the function «steward» in their documents.

III. HOW TO NOMINATE AND CHOOSE THE STEWARD

The Greek document published by Benaissa Amin is the first document that shed light on the selection of the steward of a church⁴⁴. However, no Coptic document states how the steward was nominated in the monasteries and churches. It often happens that higher positions are entrusted to clerics⁴⁵. This is confirmed by the titles attached to the stewards in the Coptic documents, as in the following [TABLE 1].

Title	Meaning	Publication
ΑΠΑ	Father	WS 1922: N°.97
ΑΡΧΗΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΟΣ	Chief of priests	KRU 1912: N°.102
ΔΙΑΚΟΝΣ	Deacon	CPR 1958: vol.4, N°.147
ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ	Bishop	KRU 1912: N°.96,100
ΜΟΝΟΥΧΣ	Monk	CO 1902: N°.158
ΕΛΔΥΙΣΤΟΣ	Smallest	BALL 1954: N°.177
ΕΥΔΑΒΕΣΤΑΤΟΣ	Godly- Righteous	KRU 1912: N°.107
ΠΕΝΕΙΩΤ	Our father	KRU 1912: N°.96
ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΟΣ	Priest	EP 1926: vol.2, N°.162
ΠΡΟΕΣΤΟΣ	Chief- Director	QUIBELL 1912: N°.232
ΣΟΗ	Brother	VC 1939: N°.87
ΣΥΓΟΥΜΕΝΟΣ	Hegumenos (head of a church)	KRU 1912: Nos.94,98,101

[TABLE 1]: Done by the researcher

²⁷ KRU 1912: N°.100; LANTSCHOOT: 1959, N°. xxiii, xlv, xlvii & xlviii.

²⁸ HENRI 1922: 196, this written form is not mentioned in specialized dictionaries.

²⁹ BALL 1954: N°.177.

³⁰ LANTSCHOOT 1959: N°. cxi, this written form is not mentioned in specialized dictionaries.

³¹ WS 1922: N°. 178.

³² KRU 1912: N°.85.

³³ CPR 1958: vol. 4, N°.32, 54; MACCOWL 1994: N°.2.

³⁴ BUDGE 1915: 191, Fol.9b2.

³⁵ O.BRIT.COPT 1905: N°.LXXII.

³⁶ EP 1926: vol.2, N°. 166.

³⁷ KRU 1912: N°.109, 85.

³⁸ LANTSCHOOT: 1973, N°.cvii, this written form is not mentioned in specialized dictionaries.

³⁹ WS 1922: N°.104.

⁴⁰ RÉMONDON 1965: N°.18.

⁴¹ O. BRIT.COPT 1905: N°.XXXI.

⁴² CPR 1958: vol.4, N°.147.

⁴³ FD2002: 563.

⁴⁴ BENAISSA 2009: 175–180.

⁴⁵ HOWARD 2005: 71.

In addition to some information in this regard can be found through what came in the Coptic sources and references, it was mentioned in the Canons of the Athanasius in its Coptic version that the steward must be a chosen man and a God-fearing <<εγεκοτρη δε εφρζοτε ρητφ>>⁴⁶, and be chosen from among the clerics of the church. In addition to that, he was received his appointment from the bishop at Easter⁴⁷. The bishop was responsible for supervising the steward and could remove him from his post if any defect was proven to him⁴⁸ <<ποι]κονομον ετνα [κω ρμπ] σαββατον μητκ [γριακη επ]εφτοπος εβολ πατ [ρμπ] εφωιηε ροναποκ [ληροσπ]ετναρψα επεφτοπος ρον απο]κληρος>>⁴⁹.

As for the number of people appointed to occupy this position, whether in the monastery or the church, it was not unified, many documents show that one steward was appointed for the monastery, who could exercise his functions for several years⁵⁰. However, many documents⁵¹ indicate that some monasteries and churches had more than a steward at the same time <<ειρζαι ηητη ητωτη απα κυριακος μν μαθαιος περσον μνσογρογς ποικονομος μπτοπος ετογδαβ>>⁵². It is noted that it is limited to the huge monasteries and churches only. It is stated in the documents of the monastery of Apa Apollo <<+ανοκ παγλως πρεσβυτερος πεκονομος ηπεντωτ απα παμων τιστηχε ++κολλογθος πρεσβυτερος ποικονομος ηπεννοβ ηιωτ τιομμετρε++ανοκ κωσμα πρεσβυτερος πεκονομος ητηνοβ πεκκλησια τιομμετρε+>>⁵³. On the other hand, sometimes, one steward was appointed to more than one monastery or church at the same time⁵⁴, which indicates the existence of administrative and financial links between several monasteries and churches.⁵⁵ Finally, evidenced from the study of some documents that there is a hierarchy for the steward's function (chief steward, general steward, assistant steward and lesser steward) <<πενσον παπα αν... πνοβ ποικονομος αγω πιωτ μπμα νογωμ>>, <<πιεδαχ μηνα πεβωω πκογι ποικονομος>>⁵⁶. In this context, the rank of the lesser stewards was mentioned in the Canons of Athanasius as responsible to the church for the preserving of precious objects <<ποικονομος ηπεκκλησια... ριχωον παϊ οηπε πνομος ηηκογι ποικονομος>>⁵⁷, and Coptic documents prove that in the event that there was more than one steward for the same monastery, each of them was responsible for a part of it, as stated in document of DairBawit 6204 <<πασον πετρος

⁴⁶ CRUM 1904: 97.

⁴⁷ WIPSYCKA 1972: 137, 148.

⁴⁸ The authority to expel a priest, deacon or another officer from the clergy generally rested with the bishop, the head of the diocese and superior of the clergy, but the archipresbyters, as superiors of the priests of a church, could also impose this penalty. SCHMELZ 2002: 141-162.

⁴⁹ CO 1902: N°.76; REVILLOUT 1900: 143, N°.8.

⁵⁰ WIPSYCKA 1972: 138.

⁵¹ KRU 1912: N°.103, 109; CO 1902: N°.44; QUIBELL 1909: N°.73; MACCOWL 1994: N°. 2- 4.

⁵² KRU 1912: N°.103.

⁵³ MACCOWL 1994: N°.3.

⁵⁴ It is probable that the rich churches, possessing property to administer, had their steward, and that the less fortunate churches either did without a steward or used a common administrator with other churches. This appears in a receipt issued by a steward as an administrator of small churches. WIPSYCKA 1972: 137.

⁵⁵ RYL 1909: N°.142.

⁵⁶ QUIBELL 1902: N°.328, 313.

⁵⁷ CRUM 1904: 100.

περσον ποικονομος ηπενειωτ απα παμουνη»⁵⁸. Delter explains that these are stewards of lower status «that the stewards of our father Apa Pamoun» are the stewards of a part of the monastery dedicated to Pamoun⁵⁹, «κολλουθος πειεαλχιςτος ηπρεβυτερος ποικονομος ηπεννοδ ηϊωτ»⁶⁰ «our father's steward» is probably the general steward, attached to the monastic superior⁶¹, «ανοκ κωσμα πρεβυτερος πεκονομος ητνοδ ηεκκλησια»⁶² «the steward of the great church» is in charge of the main church of the monastery⁶³.

Before passing this point, it should be noted that the steward may have become abbot of the monastery subsequently, as evidenced by some Coptic documents showing the steward holding the title of abbot of the monastery «ζιτοοττ παεοφιλ, ηπρεβυτερος κυριακος πμονχος αω πρηγομ, μπτοπος ετογυαβ ηπρδατος απα φοιβαμωνη»⁶⁴, «ζιτοοττ πεγδαβεστατος κυριακος πρεβυτορος αω ποικονομος μπτοπος ετογυαβ»⁶⁵.

IV. THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND ROLES OF ΟΙΚΟΝΟΥΟΣ IN MONASTERIES AND CHURCHES

The Coptic documents highlighted the multiplicity and diversity of the functions and tasks performed by the steward and his effective role in the Coptic community. Accordingly, it can be divided into several roles.

A. The Administration Role of οικονομος

In general, the resources mention that the steward participates in the management of the economic affairs of a monastery, but by studying the Coptic documents, we can say that the steward is a senior administrative officer responsible for all administrative matters in the monastery as the organizer and manager of the monastery's resources and property, as follows:

1. He was responsible for authorizing the Coptic farmers to cultivate or sow part of lands owned by the monastery, and he received the production from them «+ανοκ απα ιωαννης π... αω ποικονομος μπτοπος μιχαηλ ητπολις ρμοντ ...ε πεγδαβ, μμον⁶⁶ δε επιτρεπε νακ ετρεκχο τεντε ηετωζε μπτοπος τοογ...»⁶⁶.
2. He supervised the church's priests and punished the guilty as well as followed up on the performance of the church-related work and he was responsible for following up on the duties of the priesthood⁶⁷ «+ηπρωρπ εζ...τ ηφωβ Βικτωρ ζιτ πελοσ μιχαηλ ...πωηος ζαμα ηε... χοογ ηπρεβυτερος ετγαρε ητεκκλησια ηφαγεος Βικτωρ τστοιχει»⁶⁸.

⁵⁸ MACCOWL 1994: N°4, L.15.

⁵⁹ ALAIN 2004: 68; Brussels Coptic Database (BCD)

⁶⁰ MACCOWL 1994: N°4, L.73.

⁶¹ ALAIN 2004: 68.

⁶² MACCOWL 1994: N°4, L.75.

⁶³ ALAIN 2004: 68.

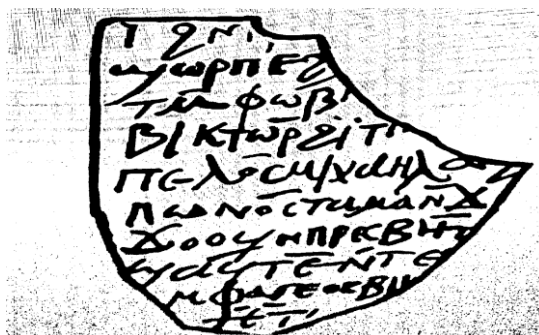
⁶⁴ KRU 1912: N°98.

⁶⁵ KRU 1912: N°101.

⁶⁶ CRUM 1934: 78.

⁶⁷ CO 1902: N°87; O.BRIT.COPT 1905: N°. XLVII.

⁶⁸ O.BRIT.COPT 1905: N°. XLVII.



[FIGURE 1]: Part of this *ostraca* mentions the administration role of the steward.

O. Brit.Copt 1905: PL. 61.

3. Many Coptic documents⁶⁹ reveal that the steward represents the administrator who takes care of managing the monastic goods, as follows:
 - He was responsible for orders payments and the delivery of wine⁷⁰ and other foodstuffs «+ΤΙ ΥΟΜΤΕ ΝΖΟΤC ΝΕΤΗ ΝΤΕ ΠΜΑ ΜΠΟΥΛΙ ΔΥΩ ΕΜ ΠΕΚΒΙΝΕ ΝΤΕ ΠΜΑ ΜΠΟΥΛΙ ΤΑΔΑ ΝΑΥ ΝΤΕ ΤΑΚΟΥΤΗΣ ΤΑΔC ΝΑΠΑ ΖΩΡ ΖΙΤΗΠΑΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΠΕΚΟΝΟΜ»,⁷¹.
 - There are many orders issued by the steward to various subordinates to sending of foodstuffs⁷² «ΕΡ ΤΑΓΑΠΗ ΝΓ† ΒΤΟ ΝΒΟΟΥΝΕ ΝΜΧΩΛ ΝΠΑΠΑ ΪΩΖΑΝΗΣ ΦΕΒΕΤΩΡΕ ΠΕ ΠΑΪ ΚΑΤΑ ΘΕ ΝΤΑΚ ΧΟΟC ΧΕΜΑΙΒΑΚ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΑΤΟΥΠΡΗΥ Α ΧΟΟC ΕΡΟΚ ΧΕΥΑΡΕ ΝΕCΗΗΥ ΖΟΒΕCΚ ΝΟΥΤΑΔΥ ΝΑΒ ΤΑΔC ΝΠΑCΟΝ ΠΒΩΛ ΖΙΤΗ ΕΠΩΧ ΠΟΪΚΟΝΟΜΟC»⁷³.
 - Some Coptic documents indicate that receiving the needs of monasteries and churches was the responsibility of the steward «ΑΙΤΗΝΟΟΥCΟΥ ΝΑΚ ΖΙΤΟC ΠΙΩΖCΑΝΗΣ ΜΑΝ ΝΒΑΜΟΥΛ ΤΑC ΝΑΠΑ ΝΑΖΡΟΥ ΠΕΙΚΟΝΟΜΟC ΖΙΤΕΝΙΩΖΑΝΗ»⁷⁴.
4. The steward was in charge of the postal administration of the monastery, which came in the Coptic documents⁷⁵ represented in receiving letters which were related to ecclesiastical issues, in addition to editing it for various subordinates, whether in the same monastery or outside it «+ΧΙ ΝΕΒΕΛΧΕ ΝΕΜΑΝΒΑΜΟΥΛ ΜΚΥΡΙC CΑΡΑΠΙΩΝ ΔΥΩ ΕΙΜΕ ΧΕΕΥΟΥ ΝΑΚ ΤΑΔC ΜΠΑCΟΝ ΠΑΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΠΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟC ΖΙΤΗΝΕΩΧ ΠΕΦΕΙΩΤ+»⁷⁶.

⁶⁹ ALAIN 2004: N^o.13, 19, 22; Ws 1922: N^o.88-89, 98, 110, 177- 178, 181, 188; BM 1905: N^o. 212.

⁷⁰ During each mass, it was obviously necessary to use a certain quantity of bread and wine for «Eu charist». WALAA 2021.

⁷¹ Ws 1922: N^o.177.

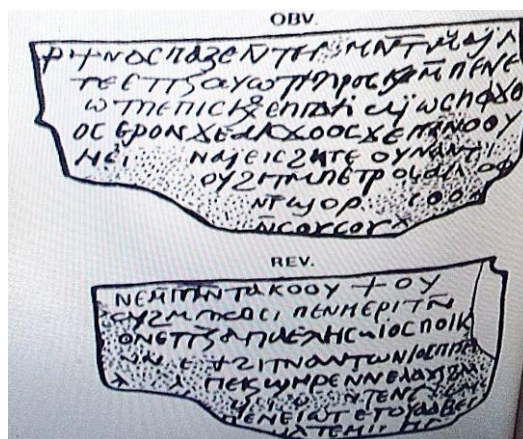
⁷² For more information on monastic food systems, see: HIND 2020.

⁷³ Ws 1922: N^o.88.

⁷⁴ Ws 1922: N^o.192.

⁷⁵ KOW 1960: N^o.361; O.BRIT.COPT 1905: N^o. LXXII; Ws 1922: N^o.95; EP 1926: vol.2, N^o. 166.

⁷⁶ Ws 1922: N^o.95.



[FIGURE 2]: Part of ostraca mentions that the steward was in charge of the postal administration of the monastery. *O.BRIT.COPT* 1905: PL. 72.

5. He was supervising the camel herds and following up on their drivers duties «+caμoyhλ atsau ετcζαϊ mπεqcon πετροc πεκονομoc mπτοποc χεετβε πρωβ nυμμανδαμoyλ, mπτοποc.....».⁷⁷
6. One of the Coptic documents sheds light on the fact that the steward is supplying of passing sailors's needs «τααc n απα ενωχ ποιχονομoc ριτηπαcon ενωχ ειc γεωργε πνεεβ mπλιβεpnoc αqει ηακ ερραϊ αρι ταγαπη βωκ επμα nηcan ωβhνε»⁷⁸.
7. The Coptic documents of donations reveal that the steward was the administrative official who received all kinds of donations presented to the monastery, which consisted of:
 - The children's donations: the documents prove that the steward played a major role in this regard, as he was responsible for receiving these children⁷⁹ and had to take care of them, supervise their upbringing, and provide everything they needed in their daily lives until they reached the age in which they could serve the monastery⁸⁰. He also had to rehabilitate and train them in the work⁸¹ they would do in the monastery⁸² «+χε nται λωριζε mπαμεριτ nωpρε ερoυn ετοποc ηαπαφοιβαμωn ταpqr ρμζαλ εροq ρμμντβαyon nυμ ετετη ηακελεγε μμοq ηαq mπερooy μn τεγη nτοκ πενλαβεστατοc κυριακοc πκημεριαρχηc αγω ποικονομοc mπτοποc ετοyααβ ηαπαφοιβαμωn»⁸³.
 - The properties donations: the steward was the administrative and legal official in the monasteries and churches to receive property donations from the lands, homes and other properties of the Copts⁸⁴ «+ανοκ μhη πωnωαnηηc ρηερμoντ ετcζαι

⁷⁷ VC 1939: N°.87.

⁷⁸ WS 1922: N°.104.

⁷⁹ KRU 1912: N°.78, 80, 89, 91, 92, 96, 100.

⁸⁰ KRU 1912: N°.87.

⁸¹ Such as sweeping, spraying water, caring for the baptismal basins and working in fields.

⁸² KRU 1912: N°.80, 85, 87, 95.

⁸³ KRU 1912: N°.95.

⁸⁴ CPR 1958: vol.4 N°.32; KRALL 1895: N°. LXXV, LXXVI; LANTSCHOOT 1973: N°.XXIII.

μΠΤΟΠΟC ΕΤΟΥΔΑΒ ΠΖΑΓΙΟC ΦΟΙΒΑΜΩΝ ΜΠΤΟΥ ΝΧΗΜΕ ΖΙΤΟΟΤΤΗΥΤΗ CΟΥΡΟΥC ΜΝΜΑΘΘΑΙΟC ΝΦΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟC ΧΕΤΙΕΠΙΤΡΕΠΕ ΝΗΤΗ ΕΠΕΙΩΖΕ»⁸⁵.

- The self – donation: one document indicates that the steward was responsible for receiving the person who donated himself to the monastery «ΑΙΧΙΜΟΟΥ ΖΜΠΛΟΥΤΗΡ ΕΤΟΥΔΑΒ ΕΤΖΙΘΗ ΜΠΕΘΥCΙΑCΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΖΗΝΒΙΧ ΕΤΟΥΔΑΒ ΜΠΕΚΕΝΟΜΟC ΕΤΜΜΑΥ ΔΥΕΙΜΕ ΔΥΝΟΥΧC ΕΧΩΙ»⁸⁶

8. He is mentioned in one of the Coptic lists as one of the employees in a pagarchy as the organizational structure, he was among the statesmen who were given gifts «ΤΕΓΗΩCΙC ΝΠΕΡΩΜΕ ΝΤΑΥΝ ΤΑΙΟ ΕΝΑ ΤΠΑΓΑΡΧΙΑ ΖΑ ΙΟΥCΤΑ ΠΑΤΨΙΝΙΔΑ..... ΖΑΠΕΚΟΝΟΜΟC ΝΑΠΑ ΙΟΥCΤΑ ΨΜΟΥΝ ΝΚΟΜΜΑ ΝΨΕ ΟΥΧΕΝΟΦ ΝΒΑΔΒΕ ΜΗΤ ΝΠΗΡΕ ΩΒΤ CΝΑΥ ΟΥCΟΡΤ ΒΤΟΟΥ ΝΠΑΠΟΙ»⁸⁷.

B. The Financial Role of οικονομος⁸⁸

The Coptic documents give numerous examples of the steward bearing all the financial burdens of the monastery and the church, as it is considered a high financial official with all financial transactions, as follows:

1. Before the state, the steward is responsible for paying the taxes which encumber the ecclesiastical goods; in this capacity, he sometimes appears in tax documents⁸⁹. Also «Steinwenter» mentioned that the οικονομος was probably responsible for the delivery of taxes to the village authorities⁹⁰, and documents from Deir El- Balai'zah confirm that he was responsible for the monastic tax account «... ΠΧΟ ΕΒΟΛ ΕΤΔΙΟΙΓΕΙCΙC ΝΠΜΟΝΑCΤΗΡ,^ο ΧΙΝΕΝΤΑΦCΗΓΧΩΡΕΙ ΝΟΙΚ,^ο ΝΑΠΑ ... »⁹¹, Gascou also proved that the tax collecting in a particular area was sometimes part of the episcopal church steward's tasks⁹².
2. The steward was entrusted with the receiving the rent of the monasteries and writing receipts of it⁹³ «ΑΝΟΚ ΙΟΥCΤΑ ΠΕΙΕΔΑΧΙCΤΟC ΝΔΙΑΚ, ΔΥΩ ΠΕΚΟΝΟΜΟC ΝΠΕΖΒΗΥΕ ΝΠΕΙΤΟΠΟC ΕΤΟΥΔΑΒ ΕΙCΖΑΪ ΝΖΕΡΟΥΟΧ ΧΕ ΔΙΧΙ ΔΥΩ ΔΙΠΛΗΡΩ ΝΤΟΟΤΚ ΝΠΕΜΦΗΤΕΥΜΑ ΝΠΗΙ ΕΠΤΟΠΟC ΕΤΕ ΠΑΙ ΠΕ ΟΥΚΑC ΕΖΟΜΕΤ»⁹⁴.
3. He was responsible for paying the wages of the workmen he contracted to work in the monastery or church⁹⁵ «ΠΕΝΕΙΩΤ ΠΕΤCΖΑΪ ΜΠΓΨΗΡΕ ΑΠΑ ΠΕΤΡΟC ΠΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟC ΧΕ ΤΙ ΟΥΔΟΥΒΙΤΟΥ ΜΝ ΟΥΚΟΥΪ ΝΖΟΪΤΕ ΝΑΜΜΩΝΕ ΕΦΚΗ ΕΠΑΝΚΑΔΟΥ ΝCΩΚ ΑΠΑΡΧΗ»⁹⁶.

⁸⁵ KRU 1912: N°.109.

⁸⁶ KRU 1912: N°.104.

⁸⁷ HASITZKA 1987: N°.30.

⁸⁸ Since the 4th century there have been stewards who regulated the financial affairs of the diocese under the supervision of the bishop. SCHMELZ 2002: 162.

⁸⁹ P.LOND 1910: vol. 4, N°.1419.

⁹⁰ STEINWENTER 1920: 34.

⁹¹ BALL 1954: N°.301.

⁹² WIPSYZKA 1991: vol.4, 1825.

⁹³ KRU 1912: N°.147; CO 1902: N°.200, 405; KRALL 1895: N°. LXXV; CPR 1958: vol.4, N°.147, 153.

⁹⁴ KRALL 1895: N°.LXXV.

⁹⁵ CO 1902: N°.88, 89; CLACKSON 2008: N°.24.

⁹⁶ CLACKSON 2008: N°.24.

4. The steward appeared in some Coptic documents⁹⁷ as one of the members of governing board of the monastery «diakonia»⁹⁸ and even suppose that the diakonia was headed by the steward who had the right to sell the monastery's property⁹⁹ and pledge to the buyer a guarantee of the sale, beside to impose a fine for those who violated him «ἐν τῷ ἐβόλῃ ἡκ ἡτοκ ἀπᾶ βικτωρ πῶμρε ἡπμᾶκαριος ἀθανάσιος ῥηχῆμε ῥανομος ἡτπολῖς ἡνεμερος ἡταγεοργιος πῶμρε ἡιογᾶννε τῶμρε ἡγῥηλῖας ἡαπᾶ βικτωρ τεσμάγτε ἐγῶλῳζῖα τᾶγ ᾶρῳν ἐπῥᾶγιος ... ἀνοκ ἰωῥᾶννης πεῖερωμος ἡπῥᾶγιος ἀπᾶ φεβᾶμων ἡπῥᾶγιος ἀπᾶ φεβᾶμων ἡκεῶε τᾶτρεῶλᾶγ ἡρωμε ῥητεκῆγεᾶ ἡτοκ ἀπᾶ βικτωρ»¹⁰⁰.
5. Coptic documents¹⁰¹ showed the steward sometimes as a lender to Coptic citizens, as a community economic activity practiced by the monastery «+ἀνοκ ἰωσῆφ πῶε ἡμῆνα πῶμ ἡῥᾶβε εἰςῥᾶι ἡαπᾶ ῥᾶνῆλ ποικονομος ἡττοπος παχῆρ πέλος ἡῳμῳν χε τῖχρεωστε ἡᾶκ ἡ^ο κερ, βῶ γῖ, κ, ῥῳο τεταρ,»¹⁰².
6. The steward was the one who made accounts for the expenses of churches and monasteries and collected them as annual report and signed it¹⁰³ «+θεδωρακ ἡκρῳσ δ, ἰῳ... πακ^τ, ἐπαυλεως διαφ^ε τῶγι ε... φαμ^θ ἰ^δ ζ^ε φαμ^θ ἰνδ^ο, ἡθυμι κερατ + ευστεφιος ἐλ^χ, οἰκ^ο, στοι +»¹⁰⁴.

C. The Religious Role of the ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ

1. Coptic documents¹⁰⁵ prove that the steward had a prominent religious status among the Copts, so they resorted to him in the monastery to take the oath before him and the Coptic pleaded for him as one of the holy religious figures to ask for intercession and healing, «ἡσῖ ἡᾶμρε ἡἡτεγᾶᾶγ ᾶγταρκοῖ ἡπανᾶγ ῥῖτᾶπῥεοφιῶεστ, πῡρεβῡτ, ᾶῳ ποικονομος εᾶῳrk ἡπῥᾶγιος ἰωῥᾶννης»¹⁰⁶, «πῖωτ πῶμρε πέπᾶ ετοῦᾶᾶβ ... ἡἡῶγῖλ ποικονομος ἀπᾶ σαῡᾶτε ἀπᾶ ἀποῶλῶ ,μῖ»¹⁰⁷, in addition to mentioning him in the Coptic sermons¹⁰⁸ «μῡωρ ὀν ῳ ἡᾶμεῡρα† ἡπεῡρεῡῳπῖ ἡῥᾶνοικονομος ἐῡῳῳ ῥεῡἡ ἡταῡτῡἡ»¹⁰⁹.

⁹⁷ MACCOWL 1994: Nos.1, 2, 3; KRU 1912: Nos.18, 50.

⁹⁸ It is a chartiable institution and the decision-making center of the monastery. WIPSYCKA 1991: 896.

⁹⁹ It is noted by studying the documents that the lands owned by churches and monasteries were not sold, but were only rented. As for the houses belonging to the monasteries, they were sold, but in some documents, it is mentioned that in the event of the buyer's death, the ownership of the house returns to the monastery again. MACCOWL 1994: Nos.3- 4.

¹⁰⁰ KRU 1912: N°.18.

¹⁰¹ CO 1902: N°.158; KRALL 1895: N°.LII; CPR 1958: vol.4, N°.54.

¹⁰² KRALL 1895: N°.LII; CPR 1958: vol.4, N°.54.

¹⁰³ Indeed, the steward receives all revenues in kind and cash and disposes of them with the bishop. WIPSYCKA 1972: 128.

¹⁰⁴ RYL 1909: N°.142.

¹⁰⁵ BM 1905: 217; QUIBELL 1912: Nos 207, 232, 295; EP 1926: vol.2, Nos. 144,162.

¹⁰⁶ EP 1926: vol.2, 162.

¹⁰⁷ QUIBELL 1912: N°.295.

¹⁰⁸ The Coptic sermons are considered one of the branches of literary documents that aren't without mentioning the steward. HENRI 1922: 196.

¹⁰⁸ RYL 1909: N°. 437.

¹⁰⁹ RYL 1909: N°. 437.

2. He is one of the clerics required to make charitable distributions either in money or in foodstuffs¹¹⁰, and he had a role in dispensing ecclesiastical benevolence. He also was a father to the orphans and widows «ΠΟΤΕ ΔΕ ΠΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ ΕΡΕΠΟΔΟΤΟΣ ΗΓΩΒ ΝΙΜ ΨΩΠΕ ΝΤΟΟΤΙ ΝΕΦΟΡΟΣ ΜΗΝΕ ΒΡΩΩΣ ΠΤΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΠΟΡΦΑΝΟΣ ΜΗΝΕΧΗΡΑ ΕΦΟΝΑΥ ΠΕΙΩΤ ΕΡΧΙΨΟΧΝΕ ΜΗΠΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ ΕΤΒΕ ΓΩΒ ΝΙΜ ΕΓΓΑΝΑΥ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ»¹¹¹, in addition to his role in the organization of assistance for the sick¹¹².
3. The steward appeared in many stories of Coptic miracles as a religious man who resorted to him in religious shrines and sanctuaries to obtain healing¹¹³.
4. The steward was one of the clergies responsible for baptism in the monastery and was most often named on the stand of water jars¹¹⁴. No doubt that also he was responsible for their supply¹¹⁵ «ΑΠΩΛΩ ΠΕΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ ΑΒΡΑΖΑΜ ΠΕΥΣΟΝ ΖΑΜΗΝ»¹¹⁶.



[FIGURE 3]: Stand for water jars bearing the name of the steward Apollo
QUIBELL 1912: PL. XLIII, 1.

5. He had a key role in providing the monastery library's needs of religious books¹¹⁷, as it was necessary to have a library inside each monastery to supply the monks with the texts necessary for prayer and performing rituals¹¹⁸ «ΑΚΟΥΩ ΜΠΧΩΜΕ ΤΗΝΟΟΥ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΠΑΪ ΝΤΟΤΕ ΠΑΒΡΑΖΑΜ ΠΔΙΑΚ, ... ΖΙΤΗ ΘΕΟΔΩΣΙΟΣ ΠΕΚΩΝΟΜΟΣ ΜΦΑΓΙΟΣ ΜΗΝΑΣ»¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁰ It is mentioned that the stewards prove that the charitable activity of an Episcopal church was directed directly by its stewards.

¹¹¹ CRUM 1904: 97, 98.

¹¹² WIPSZYCKA 1972: 110,139.

¹¹³ DRESCHER 1946: 118-119, 123-125; WIPSZYCKA 1972:140-141.

¹¹⁴ QUIBELL 1912: Nos 261-262, 294.

¹¹⁵ Stand water was used to afford refreshment to worshippers after service in the church.

¹¹⁶ QUIBELL 1912: N°. 261.

¹¹⁶ QUIBELL 1912: N°. 261.

¹¹⁷ Monastic libraries had started since the beginning of the emergence of collective monasticism organized by St. Pachomius, who urged the monks to read daily and made reading an essential thing in their lives; HERMAN 2010: 328. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25750346> Accessed on 5/05/2022.

¹¹⁸ STAIKOS 2007: 246.

¹¹⁹ ST 1921: N°. 217; KOW 1960: N°.294.

6. The title ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ was carried by the Archangel Michael¹²⁰, who mentioned that he is the trustworthy steward Michael, who manages well «ΑΓΓΕΛΟ ΤΗΡΟΥ ΜΙΧΑ/Ι ΠΕ ΠΝΟΒ ΠΑΡΧΩΝ ΠΝΑΤΠΕ ΜΗ ΠΑΠΚΑΖ ΜΙΧΑ/Ι ΠΕ ΠΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ ΕΤΗΖΟΤ ΕΦΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΕΙ ΚΑΛΩΣ»¹²¹, «ΑΝΟΚ ΠΕ ΜΙΧΑΗΛ ΠΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ ΠΤΜΗΤΕΡΟ ΠΜΠΗΥΕ ΑΝΟΚ ΜΙΧΑΗΛ ΠΑΡΧΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ»¹²². This title was also mentioned in the four gospels¹²³, f, where the god described him as the honest and wise¹²⁴.



[FIGURE 4]: The Archangel Michael

«Miscellaneous Coptic texts in the dialect of Upper Egypt»

https://openlibrary.org/books/OL7154052M/Miscellaneous_Coptic_texts_in_the_dialect_of_Upper_Egypt
Accessed on 28/04/2022.

D: The ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ as a Treasurer¹²⁵

One of the most important responsibilities of the steward is to manage the treasury of the monastery or the church, so that all valuables are under his hand. In this regard, Coptic documents indicated the following:

1. The lesser stewards were responsible to the church for the conserving precious objects, especially the liturgical or sacred vessels¹²⁶, which were often of precious metal and of great value. They had to be kept in the treasury, under the control of the steward¹²⁷.
2. The steward was also responsible for keeping the documents in the library of the monastery, as he was undoubtedly the one in charge of organizing the archives «ΑΙΣΜΗ ΠΕΙΔΩΡΕΑΣΤΙΚΟΝ ΑΙΤΑΔΕ ΜΠΕΠΕΙΩΤ ΠΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ ΜΗΠΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ ΤΑΡΕΚΑΔΕ

¹²⁰ Archangel Michael appeared bearing the title οίκονομος in many literary documents as in the church book of Basilios and in Encomium of Theodosius Archbishop of Alexandria of the Archangel Michael.

¹²¹ KÖNIGLICHE MUSEEN ZU BERLIN 1904: N°. 190².

¹²² BUDGE 1915: 397, Fol.38b.

¹²³ LK.12:41-44.

¹²⁴ https://coptic-treasures.com/bible-book/new-testament/gospels/49-luke_ Accessed on 7/05/2022.

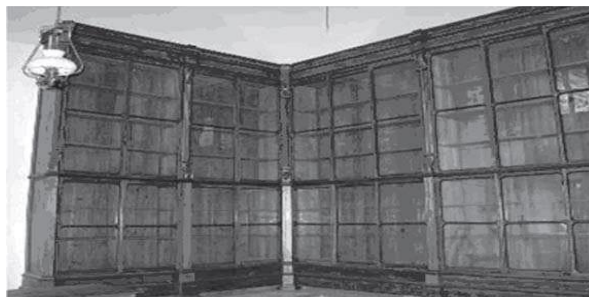
¹²⁵ The Greek documents stated that the treasury would be handed over to the responsible cleric who was appointed as a manager; in P.Grenf. II 111.3 is expressly designated as πρεσβυτερος και οικονομος (priests and steward). SCHMELZ 2002: 93.

¹²⁶ Impossibility of finding the vases of the church because of the death of the steward), appears in a story told by the Synairair. BASSET 1924: 614-615.

¹²⁷ WIPSZYCKA 1972: 101,140.

¹²⁷ WIPSZYCKA 1972: 101,140.

ῥητὴ βιβλίωθεν κὴν μνημοναστηρίον ἐτοῦ ααβ»¹²⁸, «ζουρ παπα συμεων ἐγγυοβὲ ἐπερρο
πτετααφ ππσαρ αβραζαμ εποικονομος παπα ἰωζακνης»¹²⁹.



[FIGURE 5]: Cupboards for keeping books in monasteries.

3. One of his most important duties as a treasurer was to keep the keys of the monastery and the church in his secretariat, and when he was separated, the keys were taken from his hands «ΤΕΤΗΜΗΤΜΑΙΝΟΥΤΕ ΠΕΙΩΤ... ΕΤΟΥΑΑΒ ἘΖΑΙ ΠΣΑΦ ΕΤΒΕ ΠΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ ΠΠΣΥΚΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΠΠΖΑΓΙΟΣ ΙΩΖΑΚΝΗΣ ΠΦΕΛΛΟ ΤΑΡΟΥΝΤΦ ΕΒΟΛ ΠΤΟΥΒΙ ΠΨΟΥΤ ΠΤΟΟΤΦ»¹³⁰.
4. He was considered a trustworthy and trusty person so he appeared in many documents as a witness¹³¹ «+ ΑΝΟΚ ΑΠΑ ΙΣΑΑΚ ΠΪΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ ΠΠ ΑΠΑ ΖΟΡΩΝ ΠΤΠΕΡΣΙΣ ΠΒΑΒΥΛΩΝ ΤΟ ΜΗΝΤΡΕ+»¹³², «ΑΠΠΑΡΑΚΑΛΕΙ ΠΖΗΚΑΙ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΟΣ ΠΑΪΩΜΑΤΙΚΟΣ ΑΥΕΡΜΗΤΡΕ+ΑΝΟΚ ΚΩΣΜΑ ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΟΣ ΠΕΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ ΠΤΠΟΒ ΠΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΤΙΟΜΗΤΡΕ+ΚΟΖΛΟΥΘΟΣ ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΟΣ ΠΕΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ ΜΠΠΟΒ ΠΙΩΤ ΤΙΟΜΜΕΤΡΕ+»¹³³.

V. EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT AND FUNCTION OF ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ

By the 4th century AD¹³⁴, the function of the steward is well attested in monasteries and churches¹³⁵. It can be said that this function has become a religious nature¹³⁶, as it was a rule performed by a presbyter or deacon¹³⁷. The steward was one of the medical personnel in early monastic communities¹³⁸, where he was one of those responsible for medical organizations such as providing medical tools and food for sick monastics¹³⁹.

The 5th century AD¹⁴⁰, The steward was mentioned in many documents that show the continuation of the religious nature of this function, we find the tasks of the steward in the 5th

¹²⁸ KRU 1912: №.96.

¹²⁹ EP 1926: vol.2, №. 397.

¹³⁰ REVILLOUT 1900: 143, № 8.

¹³¹ MACCOWL 1994: Nos. 3- 4; BM 1905: №.51; BALL 1954: №.116; KRU 1912: №.75.

¹³² REVILLOUT 1876: №.3, <https://www.trismegistos.org/text/85277>

Accessed on 4/05/2022

¹³³ MACCOWL 1994: №.4.

¹³⁴ To talk about the steward in this period, we rely on what historians mentioned in the literary sources, as the research didn't find Coptic documents for this title dated at this period.

¹³⁴ WIPSYKA 1991: vol.4, 1825.

¹³⁵ WIPSYKA 1991: vol.4, 1825.

¹³⁶ During the Greek era, this function had only an administrative nature.

¹³⁷ WIPSYKA 1991: vol.4, 1825.

¹³⁸ Since the early 4th century AD, the monastic leaders were responsible for keeping monastics as healthy as possible. REHAB 2019.

¹³⁹ CRISLIP 2005: 17, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40005981>

Accessed on 29/04/2022.

¹⁴⁰ The council of Chalcedon of 451 AD sanctioned an already existing practice of the steward.

century revolving around religious works, as he was responsible for baptism in the monastery and providing the needs of worshipers after service in the church¹⁴¹. It was also mentioned in literary documents that he had a role in dispensing ecclesiastical benevolence; he also was a father to the orphans and widows¹⁴².

The 6th century AD¹⁴³, this period testifies to the beginning of the steward's involvement in the economic and organizational work of the monasteries, where he was responsible for providing the needs of the monastery and issuing many orders related to foodstuffs¹⁴⁴. He was also entrusted with the charge of bursar in a church of Djeme, in the middle of the 6th century¹⁴⁵.

From the 7th to 9th century AD, the documents of this period show the multiplicity of the tasks of the steward and the increase in its authority. The steward became the administrative and legal representative and was responsible for all financial transactions of the monastery or the church¹⁴⁶, who hand to him over all the community work and demanding contacts with the world, and he was considered one of the employees in a pagarchy as the organizational structure¹⁴⁷. He also reached a great religious status¹⁴⁸, even the title *oikonomoc* was mentioned in one of the literary documents as a title for the archangle Gabriel in the church book of Basilios¹⁴⁹. Finally, it can be said that the function of the steward has reached the height of its prosperity and strength in this period, and this is confirmed by an ensemble of documents pertaining to this period which reflects a shift in the meaning of the term *οικονομος*, which had come to be used interchangeably with title *πρεσβυτερος*¹⁵⁰ in order to describe the abbot¹⁵¹.

The 10th centuries AD¹⁵², Wipszycka mentioned that the new meaning of the term *οικονομος* survived later on during the 10th century¹⁵³.

11th centuries AD¹⁵⁴, the Coptic documents dating from this period are generally few, and we find the emergence of the term *οικονομος* in this century represented as a title for names of some people on stelae only¹⁵⁵.

This century can be considered the end of the appearance of the term *οικονομος*, but its function didn't disappear, as the term *οικονομος*, was replaced by the term «'AL-qwms» in the Arabic documents, who performed the same tasks¹⁵⁶.

¹⁴¹ QUIBELL 1912: N^{os}. 261-262, 294.

¹⁴² CRUM 1904: 97, 98.

¹⁴³ The source of all documents of this period came from wadi sarga.

¹⁴⁴ WS 1922: N^{os}. 88- 89, 98, 110, 177, 178, 181, 188.

¹⁴⁵ WIPSZYCKA 1972: 140.

¹⁴⁶ There are many documents that explain this: CO 1902: N^{os}. 87-89, 158, 200, 212; BALL 1954: N^{os}. 177, 301; CPR 1985: vol.4, N^{os}. 33, 147, 153; KRU 1912: N^{os}. 78, 80, 89, 91; KRALL 1895: N^{os} LXXV, LXXVI, MACCOWL 1994: 145, 149.

¹⁴⁷ HASITZKA 1987: N^o. 30.

¹⁴⁸ EP 1926: vol.2, N^{os}. 144, 162; BM 1905: 217.

¹⁴⁹ KÖNIGLICHE MUSEEN ZU BERLIN 1904: N^o. 190².

¹⁵⁰ The steward held this title in many Coptic documents.

¹⁵¹ KRU 1912: N^{os}. 98, 101; BUDGE 1915: 244, Fol. 16b.

¹⁵² It should be noted that the research didn't find any Coptic documents for the steward's function dated to this period.

¹⁵³ WIPSZYCKA 1991: vol.4, 1826.

¹⁵⁴ The use of Arabic as an official language prevailed.

¹⁵⁵ O.BRIT.COPT 1905: vol.7.

¹⁵⁶ 'Al- Farīd 1993: 247.

VI. THE MOST FAMOUS STEWARDS IN THE COPTIC DOCUMENTS

The following table sumsup some information that can be drawn from the Coptic documents about the most famous stewards were employed in the monasteries and churches:

Name	Date	Provenance	Publication
ΑΠΩΛΩ	5 th century	Monastery of Apa Jeremias	QUIBELL 1912: Nos. 203, 207, 232, 261-262, 295, 313.
Υεωργε			
ΔαρειΔ			
Κολλογθοο			
Κυρος			
μηνΔ	6 th -7 th century	Monastery of Wadi Serga	Ws 1922: Nos. 86-87,89-,91,93,95- 96, 97,98, 104, 110, 150, 177, 178, 181, 188, 192, 376- 378.
Ενωχ			
Ιογστος			
Ναζρογ			
Παπνογτε			
СτεφΔнос	7 th century	Topos of Michael in Armant	CRUM 1934: 78.
ΙωΔννης			
πθεοφιΔετο	7 th century	Monastery of Phoibammon	Co 1902: N°.158.
ΙωζΔννης	7 th -8 th century	Monastery of Phoibammon	KRU 1912: Nos.18, 80, 89, 91- 92, 98, 100-102,107,109.
Κυριακος			
Соγρος			
ΘεοΔωσιος	7 th -8 th century	Monastery of Mena	KOW 1960: N°.294.
μαρογ	7 th -8 th century	Topos of Markos	CPR 1958: vol.4, N°.32.
Петрос	7 th -8 th century	Topos in Thebes.	VC: 1939 N°.87.
Αβραζαμ	8 th century	Monastery of	EP 1926: vol.2, Nos. 144, 397.

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ΑΚΤΟΥΑΡΙΟC		Epiphanius	
ΒΙCΤΩΡ	8 th century	Monastery of Phoibammon	Co 1902: N°.223.
ΔΑΝΗΔ	8 th century	Topos of Psohêar in Schmûn.	CPR 1958: vol.2, N°.54; KRALL 1895: N°.LII.
ΕΙCΑΚ	8 th century	Monastery of Dair al-Bala'izah	BALL: N°.167, 177.
ΕΛΗCΑΪΟC	8 th century	Topos in Antonuos.	O. BRIT. COPT 1905: LXXII.
ΙΟΥCΤΑ	8 th century	Topos in Thebes.	CPR 1958: vol.4, N°.153.
ΙCΑΔΚ	8 th century	Monastery of jeremias in Memphis	REVILLOUT 1876: N°3.
ΚΟΖΛΟΥΘΟC	8 th century	Topos in Thebes.	Co 1902: N°.405.
ΜΙΧΑΗΔ	8 th century	Church of St. Victor	O. BRIT. COPT 1905: XLVII.
ΠΑΖΟΜΟ	8 th century	Unknown	CPR 1958: vol.4, N°.147.
CΑΛΩΜ	8 th century	Church or monast of Apa Faustus	Co 1902: N°.51.
ΚΩCΜΑ	9 th century	Monastery	MACCOWL 1994: 145, 149, 153.
ΠΑΥΛΟC		of Apa Apollo	

[TABLE 2]: Done by the researcher.

VII. CONCLUSION

The Copts used the term *Oikonomoc* to express a job title for an ecclesiastical or monastic functionary. It cannot be considered a religious or honorary title, but whoever holds this title is considered a representative of the church or monastery, and it is worth noting that this job was limited to men only.

The linguistic use of the title *Oikonomoc* in Coptic documents can be dated from the beginning of the 5th century AD to the 11th century AD, and it is noted that it was more common in the period between the 7th -9th centuries AD, which indicates that the function of *Oikonomoc* became of great and fundamental importance in the Egyptian churches in this period.

The steward was chosen from among the clergy by the bishop, and in most monasteries and churches this position was held by one person each. But, it was noticed that in the rich monasteries and churches, sometimes two or three persons were appointed to take over, and each of them was assigned to manage a separate part from the other. In addition, some documents indicate that one steward was appointed to more than a church at the same time which indicates the existence of financial and administrative links between the churches.

The study shows that there was a gradation in the function of the steward, which mentioned the chief steward, general steward, assistant and lesser steward.

The research reached to determine the responsibilities and functions that were carried out by the Stewards, which reveal many aspects of the organization of the monasteries, and bespeak a sophisticated legal culture on the part of the Copts in the period from the 7th to the 11th century AD.

The functions of the steward were very extensive. He had the upper hand over the monastic administration, as he was a high financial official with all financial transactions and his authority is also asserted on the monastery treasury, in addition to his religious duties, and in several documents dated to the 7th -9th centuries. The steward almost always appears as the legal representative of the convent and in his name signs contracts, accepts donations and consecrated children to the convent.

The study of this function reveals many aspects of the life of the Copts, which are: Monasteries and churches had great economic independence for through their resources, which were managed by the steward. Monasteries and churches had an active role in the economic activities of the Copts outside the monastery, which appeared in lending, providing job opportunities and providing foodstuffs.

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