

extract

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A Coptic Prayer of Final Inclination on Two Ostraca

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In the late antique Egyptian liturgy presidential prayers addressed to Jesus Christ rather than to the Father are few and far between.¹ Although one of the three received liturgies of the Coptic church, the liturgy of St Gregory the Theologian, is addressed to the Son,² this liturgy is only attested for the early medieval period by two Sahidic copies of its anaphora from Upper Egypt, P.Vindob. K4854 + K82 + K83 (9th c., provenance unknown)³ and the so-called ‘Great

- 1 For the address of presidential prayers to Christ see Joseph Jungmann, *The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer*, trans. from the 2nd revised edition (1962), Alba House, Staten Island 1965, esp. 213-219. His claims were revisited in B. D. Spinks (ed.), *The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer: Trinity, Christology, and Liturgical Theology*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MI 2008, esp. 1-20, 23-50, 51-64, 88-111.
- 2 On the liturgy of St Gregory, see Ernst Hammerschmidt, *Die Koptische Gregoriosanaphora*. Berliner Byzantinistische Arbeiten 8, Akademie, Berlin 1957, and Albert Gerhards, *Die griechische Gregoriosanaphora. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des eucharistischen Hochgebets*, Aschendorff, Münster 1984.
- 3 Jutta Henner, *Fragmenta Liturgica Coptica: Editionen und Kommentar liturgischer Texte der Koptischen Kirche des ersten Jahrhunderts*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 13, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2000, 38-43. On the date, see Ágnes T. Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri: An Introduction*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 114, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2019, 361.

Euchologion' of the White Monastery near Sohag (ca. 1000).⁴ Of the dozens of liturgical prayers preserved in the papyrological record too, only a handful are addressed to the Son. These include, besides the final inclination prayer presented below, the following ones: the prayer of the evening offering of incense still used in the Coptic liturgy preserved on two witnesses, P.Rain.UnterrichtKopt. 197⁵ and BM EA 5876⁶ (both 7th or 8th c., from the area of Western Thebes); the fragmentary 'prayer of Sunday' on P.Bal. I 30 fol. f 8b + fol. f 167a V, 15-17 (6th c., Deir el-Bala'izah); the anaphora on Bonn, Univ.-Bibl. inv. So 267⁷ (6th or 7th c., provenance unknown), and perhaps the extremely fragmentary fraction prayer on P.Bal. II 412, R, 8-17 (6th or 7th c., Deir el-Bala'izah). Besides, Arsenius Mikhail has argued for the Alexandrian origin of the prayer of *prothesis* 'O Master Lord Jesus Christ, the coeternal Logos', which is used in the Coptic church up to

- 4 See Emmanuel Lanne, *Le Grand Euchologe du Monastère Blanc*, Patrologia Orientalis 28.2, Brepols, Turnhout 1958, 288-291, fol. 28-29 of the euchologion. On the date see Alin Suciu, "À propos de la datation du manuscrit contenant le Grand Euchologe du Monastère Blanc", in *Vigiliae Christianae* 65 (2011), 189-198. There is a third Sahidic copy of the prayer as well in a Sahidic-Fayumic euchologion dateable perhaps to the twelfth or thirteenth century, Prague, Or.Inst. Ms IV, (Valerie Hažmuková, "Miscellaneous Coptic Prayers II", in *Archiv Orientalní* 9 (1937), 107-145, 141-144).
- 5 Papyrological editions will be cited in accordance with the established papyrological abbreviations, see www.papyri.info/checklist. For further information on the individual items and additional bibliography, see Á. T. Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 289-371 (appendix), from which also the dates of the papyri are taken. For a discussion of the arguments in favour of the proposed dates see the notes there as well as Á. T. Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 74-94.
- 6 Ed. O.Brit.Mus.Copt. I p. 24. pl. 18.3, see also Ágnes T. Mihálykó, "Writing the Christian Liturgy in Egypt (3rd to 9th century)", PhD diss., University of Oslo, 2016, 291.
- 7 Ed. Hans Quecke, "Ein neues koptisches Anaphora-Fragment", in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 39 (1973), 216-223.

now but attested also in different redactions in Byzantine and Slavic euchologia and in Nubia; the earliest manuscript record of this prayer hails back to the late eighth century, but the text is certainly older.⁸

None of the examples cited above can be dated to the period before the sixth century with certainty. In fact, the extant evidence suggests that in Egypt the presidential prayers were as a rule addressed to the Father in the fourth and fifth centuries. Neither of the two Egyptian collections of prayers from the period, the Prayers of Sarapion⁹ and the liturgical sections of the so-called Aksumite Collection,¹⁰ contain any prayers addressed to the Son with the sole exception of an exorcism

8 Ramez Mikhail, *The Presentation of the Lamb: The Prothesis and Preparatory Rites of the Coptic Liturgy*, Studies in Eastern Christian Liturgies 2, Aschendorff, Münster 2020, 225-230 on the Alexandrian origin and 216-225 on the manuscript tradition.

9 See Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Prayers of Sarapion of Thmuis: A Literary, Liturgical, and Theological Analysis*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 249, Pontificio Istituto Orientale, Roma 1995 for the most recent edition, and Heinzgerd Brakmann, **ΒΑΠΤΙΣΜΑ ΔΙΝΕΣΕΩΣ**: *Ordines und Orationen Kirchlicher Eingliederung in Alexandrien und Ägypten*, in Heinzgerd Brakmann – Tinatin Chronz – Claudia Sode (eds.), *Neugeboren aus Wasser und Heiligem Geist, Kölner Kolloquium zur Initiatio Christiana*, Jerusalem Theologisches Forum 37, Aschendorff, Münster 2020, 85-196, 90-97 for a new discussion with extensive bibliography. The collection most probably dates from the fourth or latest the turn of the fourth and fifth centuries.

10 The Aksumite collection is a canonico-liturgical collection preserved in Ethiopic and discovered in 1999, which goes back to a Greek compilation from late fifth or early sixth-century Alexandria and contains a Euchologion and a baptismal Ritual, see Alessandro Bausi, “La collezione aksumita canonico-liturgica”, in *Adamantius* 12 (2006), 43-70; H. Brakmann, **ΒΑΠΤΙΣΜΑ ΔΙΝΕΣΕΩΣ**: *Ordines und Orationen Kirchlicher Eingliederung in Alexandrien und Ägypten*, 104-109, and the summary of the state of the research in Ágnes T. Mihálykó, “Healing in Christian Liturgy in Late Antique Egypt: Sources and Perspectives”, in *Trends in Classics* 13 (2021), 154-194, 159). The Euchologion part is inedited up to this date, my information stems from Bausi’s transcription and translation, which he kindly agreed to share with me in May 2020.

of the bread, water, or oil in the Ritual section of the latter.¹¹ The same picture emerges from the papyri. The address to Jesus Christ was apparently avoided in prayers recited by the celebrant on behalf of the congregation, though it is frequent in private prayers,¹² amulets,¹³ hymns,¹⁴ and acclamations¹⁵ in the same period, as the papyrological record amply attests.¹⁶

It is only in the sixth century that presidential prayers addressed to Christ appear in Egypt, but even then, they are the exception rather than the rule. In the corpus of liturgical prayers preserved on papyrus from the sixth to the ninth centuries, there are sixty-six copies of prayers addressed to the Father compared to merely eight copies of prayers to the Son. Therefore, the prayer of final inclination (the final dismissal prayer of the Eucharistic liturgy, during which the

11 Alessandro Bausi, *The Baptismal Ritual in the Earliest Ethiopic Canonical Collection*, in Heinzgerd Brakmann – Tinatin Chronz – Claudia Sode (eds.), *Neugeboren aus Wasser und Heiligem Geist. Kölner Kolloquium zur Initiatio Christiana*, Aschendorff, Münster 2020, 31–83, 65.

12 E.g., the end of PGM P21 (“good luck charm” or daily prayer, 5th/6th c.), PSI VI 9 (a hymnic prayer, 4th c.).

13 E.g., PGM P5b (5th c.), Suppl. Mag. I 30 (5th/6th cent.), I 31 (5th/6th cent.).

14 P.Würzb. inv. K 1003 (late 3rd or early 4th c.), P.Amh. I 2 (late 3rd or early 4th c.), P.Köln IV 292 (4th or 5th c.), BKT VI 6 8 (5th c.), BKT IX 44 (5th c.), in addition to the two fifth-century copies of the Great Doxology (Scheide Ms 144 and P.Berol. inv. 17449), which alternate the address to the Father and to Jesus Christ.

15 The curious litany on BKT IX 155 (5th c., Hermopolis).

16 This situation is in line with what Jungmann observed for the early period for other regions as well (J. Jungmann, *The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer*, 213–214). However, Jungmann’s claim that this was the general rule for the church for the first five centuries has been found incorrect. It has been argued that especially in Syria presidential prayers addressed to Christ were acceptable, see B. Varghese, *Prayers Addressed to Christ in the West Syrian Tradition*, in Bryan D. Spinks (ed.), *The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer: Trinity, Christology, and Liturgical Theology*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MI 2008, 88–111.

congregation inclined their heads to receive the blessing),¹⁷ which is reedited here from two Coptic ostraca, represents a rare type in late antique Egyptian liturgical praying.

What makes this prayer even more interesting is the fact that in this case, unlike for most liturgical prayers preserved in the papyrological record, we can reconstruct the liturgical context of the prayer. The two copies of the prayer come to all likelihood from the monastic hub of Western Thebes or the wider area, whose main period of activity falls in the late sixth to eighth centuries.¹⁸ These monasteries and hermitages have supplied rich finds of liturgical texts, mainly preserved on ostraca, over a hundred of which has been edited so far. This rich find includes almost every prayer of the Eucharist, the anaphora as well as the minor prayers of the pre- and post-anaphora (the so-called “anaphorische Nebengebete”), in one or occasionally

17 On the place of the final inclination prayer in the Coptic liturgy see Á. T. Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 64-65 and Heinzgerd Brakmann, *Le déroulement de la Messe copte. Structure et histoire*, in A. M. Triacca – A. Pistoia (eds.), *L'eucharistie: célébrations, rites, piétés*, C. L. V. Edizioni liturgiche, Roma 1995, 107-132, 127.

18 On Western Thebes and the liturgical texts from the area see Á. T. Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 115-152. Research on the Western Theban monasteries and hermitages has focused on the monastic settlements in the Valley of Kings and Queens opposite Luxor and its immediate surroundings, but Frederic Krueger has demonstrated the need to look beyond this area to other monasteries in the wider environment, from which ostraca purchased through the antiquities market may equally derive. Frederic Krueger, *Andreas von Hermonthis und das Kloster des Apa Hesekei. Mikrohistorische Untersuchungen zu Kirchengeschichte und Klosterwesen im Gebiet von Armant (Oberägypten) in byzantinischer Zeit anhand der koptischen Ostraka der Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig (O.Lips.Copt. II)*, 2 vols, Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete – Beiheft 43, De Gruyter, Berlin/Boston 2020.

even two copies.¹⁹ All of these are addressed to the Father; apparently the Western Theban monks addressed their Eucharistic liturgy to God the Father. The address to the Son in the final inclination is therefore even more remarkable, since in Egyptian Eucharistic praying the address of the minor prayers tend to be aligned with the address of the liturgy. By contrast, in the Syrian non-Chalcedonian liturgies it has become a rule that the anaphora and the minor prayers are addressed to God the Father, except for the *anamnesis* and the final inclination, which is addressed to the Son.²⁰ It is thus likely that the address to the Son in the final inclination prayer reflects Syrian influence on the Western Theban liturgy.

On the other hand, the Syrian origin of the prayer itself cannot be proven for the moment. I have not been able to identify the prayer in the printed Syrian liturgies, and, though the final request has parallels in the Syro-Palestinian liturgical area (see notes to ll. 13-17), the text with its extensive biblical citations is too little characteristic to provide a firm proof for a Syrian origin of the prayer.

The influence of the Syrian liturgy on that of the Coptic non-Chalcedonian church has long been noted by liturgists,²¹ though it has never been explored thoroughly. This neglect is partly because the sources for the liturgy of this period are scattered, fragmented, and they lack extensive source critical studies. In fact, the abundantly documented Western Theban area offers a unique opportunity to observe a non-Chalcedonian liturgy in its formative period and

19 See Á. T. Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 142-145. The only exceptions are the prayer of fraction, the absence of which is likely by chance, and the prayer of thanksgiving after communion (O.Crum 519 contains more probably a *diaconicon*).

20 J. Jungmann, *The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer*, 62.

21 See e.g., Achim Budde, *Die ägyptische Basilios-Anaphora: Text–Kommentar–Geschichte*, Jerusalem Theologisches Forum 7, Aschendorff, Münster 2004, 580-582.

the role of the Syrian influence. The clergy of Western Thebes were devoted members of the non-Chalcedonian hierarchy organized by the patriarch Theodosius of Alexandria (535-567) and his successors Peter IV (567-569) and Damian (569-605).²² They also appear to have been active in a liturgical reform. Abraham, bishop of Hermonthis between ca. 590 and 621 and abbot of the Western Theban monastery of St Phoibammon, passed liturgical regulations and controlled their observation,²³ and Pesynthius, bishop of Koptos between 599 and 632 and a frequent visitor in Western Thebes, was remembered for instituting “the correct order of celebration from the beginning”²⁴ and for “grabbing the rudders of the worship of God.”²⁵ Therefore, a detailed study of the Western Theban liturgy through the lens of *liturgie comparée* would be much desired. Such a study may easily reveal further instances of Syrian influence on the formation of the non-Chalcedonian liturgy besides this prayer of final inclination.

The two ostraca edited below, O.CrumVC 2 and O.Torino inv. 7138, preserve the prayer in Sahidic Coptic. The two copies are nearly complete and in almost verbatim agreement. The only exceptions are a few almost entirely faded lines towards the end of the text of O.CrumVC 2 (ll. 19-21, these might be either the accidental repetition

22 See Renate Dekker, *Episcopal Networks and Authority in Late Antique Egypt: Bishops of the Theban Region at Work*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 264, Peeters, Leuven 2018, esp. 4-11 and 72-121.

23 R. Dekker, *Episcopal Networks and Authority in Late Antique Egypt*, 184-185.

24 P.Berol. 11346.x+3-4. Alberto Camplani, *A Pastoral Epistle of the Seventh Century Concerning the Eucharist* (Pap. Berlin P. 11346), in Verena M. Lepper (ed.), *Forschung in der Papyrussammlung: Eine Festgabe für das Neue Museum*, Akademie, Berlin 2012, 377-386, 379; see also Ágnes T. Mihálykó, “The Thrice-blessed Pesynthios of Koptos and the Presanctified Holies: Some Notes on a Coptic Pastoral Letter (P.Berol. 11346)”, in *Adamantius* 24 (2018), 143-149.

25 E. A. Wallis Budge, *Coptic Apocrypha in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*, Horace Hart, Oxford 1913, 90 (trans. R. Dekker, *Episcopal Networks and Authority in Late Antique Egypt*, 238).

of previous clauses from the prayer or additional clauses missing from O.Torino inv. 7138) and the doxology in ll. 21-22, which was dropped on O.Torino inv. 7138 because of its currency. I have not been able to identify the text with any prayers preserved in the later manuscript tradition from Egypt or elsewhere.

The bulk of the prayer is composed of a string of biblical quotations on the acceptance of prayers, to which a short and rhetorical request for eternal life is attached, which draws a parallel between the earthly communion in the Eucharist and the heavenly communion with the saints. The wording is not typical of final inclination prayers from Egypt, which tend to elaborate on the motive of the congregation's bending of the head and ask for various, oftentimes earthly, benefits. Nevertheless, the reference to the preceding communion (ll. 13-15 of O.CrumVC 2) locates it firmly in the post-communion rites, and the motive of inclination is evoked in the request to God to bend his ears to listen to the prayers; this request appears in several prayers of inclination as a divine response to the congregation's bending of the head.

The two ostraca have been edited by W. E. Crum in 1939 (O.CrumVC 2) and by F. Rossi in 1895 (O.Torino inv. 7138).²⁶ Though Crum noted Rossi's ostrakon in his list of liturgical texts from Western Thebes,²⁷ he failed to recognize the identity of the two texts when he edited O.CrumVC 2. Both ostraca are in a relatively good state of preservation, though small chunks are missing, and some letters are faded on both, and the writing on the back of O.CrumVC 2 is much damaged. Since the two copies preserve the same text with insignificant variants, the one copy can be used to reconstruct the

26 Francesco Rossi, *Di alcuni cocci copti del Museo Egiziano di Torino. Estr. dagli Atti della R. Accademia delle Scienze di Torino*, Vol. XXX, Carlo Clausen, Torino 1895.

27 H. E. Winlock – W. E. Crum, *The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Egyptian Expedition, New York 1926, 199.

text of the other, and the text of the first editions can be improved at many points. The present reedition of the two ostraca is based on high-resolution images kindly provided by the Ashmolean Museum and by Suzanne Töpfer, curator of the Museo Egizio in Turin.

I. O.CrumVC 2

Western Thebes 19.2 × 18.4 cm VII/VIII

Oxford, Ashmolean Museum (*olim* Bodleian Library), Coptic.
Inscr. 472

ED.PR. O.CrumVC 2

CAT. www.trismegistos.org TM No. 111245; Á. T. Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, No. 95

The large and thick limestone fragment was inscribed on both sides. It is preserved complete, but the text is faded in part on the front and to a large extent on the back, where the inventory number was also written over some faded letters. The text is followed by a well-preserved drawing, probably a sketch for a decorative frieze in a book. In case this drawing was associated with the prayer, it might have been designed as the decorative frieze at the end of a prayer book into which this prayer, the last prayer of the Eucharistic liturgy, was to be copied. However, the connection between text and drawing is by no means necessary. In the blank space of ca. 5 cm at the bottom, three patches of ink are visible, these might be further drawings that were covered with ink for some reason. On the front of the ostrakon the scribe left only a tiny space of ca. 0.5 cm at the top but otherwise used all available space.

The scribe used high dots to divide clauses. Some of these take the form of small curves, these are typically situated within clauses (e.g., l. 2 $\overline{\Pi\rho\rho\omicron}^{\circ}\overline{\text{N}\eta\epsilon\rho\rho\omega\omicron\Upsilon}$, ll. 14–15. $\overline{\epsilon\pi\epsilon\kappa\sigma\omega\mu\alpha}^{\circ}\overline{\mu\eta}\overline{\pi\epsilon\kappa\sigma\iota\omicron\Upsilon}$). In the margin of l. 21, before $\Delta\Delta\text{B}$, there is a sign in the shape of a

large Π seated in a semicircular Υ with a *trema* above. This might be an abbreviation for $\Upsilon\pi\acute{\epsilon}\rho$; for a similar abbreviation on a Greek documentary papyrus see RMO inv. no. F.1948/3.5, 4.²⁸ The word might be a marginal notation marking the dittography (i.e., ‘above’). However, this word and abbreviation was not used in Coptic, thus its presence remains a puzzle.

The text is written in a competent hand that employed neat, informal upright majuscules that resemble the Biblical majuscules but do not reach the formality of that style. The letter forms are rounded, and several letters (in particular τ , ν , ϵ , κ , Π) have decorative dots at the end of the strokes. μ is done in three strokes, Υ has the upright shape, and Δ has sometimes a rounded and sometimes an angular belly. The differentiation between thin and thick strokes is not marked. Similar hands can be observed in Western Thebes over the seventh and eighth centuries; indeed, the script comes close to both the hermit Frange’s more formal productions (e.g. O.Frangé 53, 68, 90, or 208), who was active in the early eighth century, and to that of the priest Pesynte, correspondent of the priest Mark of the *topos* of St. Mark, who lived at the beginning of the seventh century (O.Saint-Marc 59). Due to the conservative tendencies in the writing styles of the region, the ostrakon cannot be dated with more precision. The language is a regular Sahidic. The scribe employs both connective and syllabic superlinear strokes.

No acquisition information is available for the ostrakon. However, three arguments speak for an attribution to the Western Theban monasteries or the surrounding areas. First, the material limestone was most widely used there as a writing material (though not unknown elsewhere either). Second, the hand aligns closely with scripts known from this region. Third, the text of the prayer is almost verbatim

²⁸ Klaas A. Worp, “Greek von Scherling Papyri in Leiden”, in *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 50 (2013), 15–38.

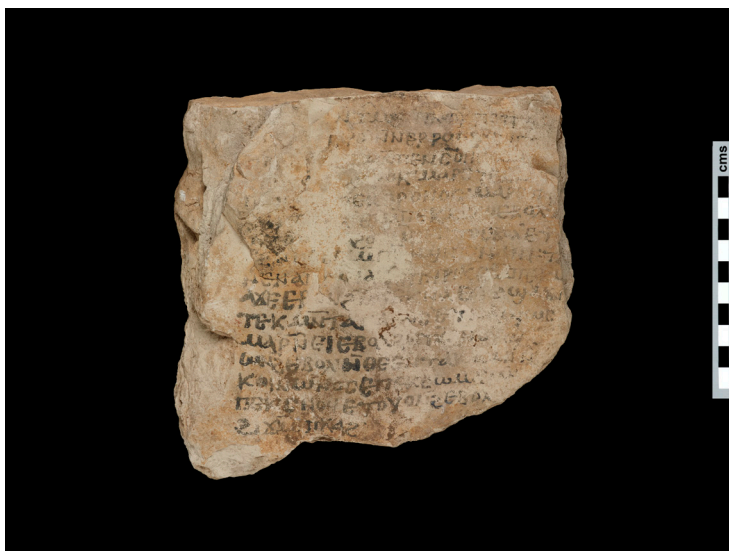
the same as the one recorded on O.Torino inv. 7138, and a Western Theban provenance is likely for the latter ostrakon, see below. Thus, it is probable that the present ostrakon stems from the Western Theban hermitages or the wider surrounding too.

recto

- 1 [ΠΧΟΕΙ]Ϛ ΝΤΜΕ· ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΠΩΔ
2 [ΕΝΕ2] ΠΡΡΟ̇ ΝΝΕΡΡΩΟΥ̇ ϚΩΤΜ
3 [Ε]ΠΕ[ΝΩΛΗΛ] ΜΝ ΠΕΝCΟΠC ΜΔ[ΡΕ-]
4 [Π]ΕΝ[2ΡΟ]Ο[Υ ΕΙ] ΩΔΡΟΚ ΜΑΡΕΤΕΝΜΕ-
5 [ΤΔ]ΝΟ[ΙΔ] Π[Ω2 ΩΔ] ΠΕΚΘΡΟΝΟC ΜΑΡΕΠΧΙ
6 [Ε]2[ΡΑΙ ΝΝΕΝ]Ϛ[Ι]Χ̇ ΕΙ ΜΠΕΚΜΤΟ ΕΒΟΛ̇ Μ-
7 [ΠΡ]ΚΤΟΝ̇ ΕΠΑ2ΟΥ̇ ΜΠΕΚΜ̇ ΤΟ ΕΒΟΛ̇ ΕΤΒ[Ε]
8 ΝΕΝΝΟΒΕ̇ ΜΠΡ̇† ΩΠΕ̇ ΝΑΝ ΕΤΒ[Ε]
9 ΝΕΝΑΝΟΜΙΔ̇ ϚΕΠΗ ΡΙΚΕ ΜΠΕΚΜ[Δ-]
10 ΔΧΕ ΕΡΟΝ 2Μ ΠΕΚΝΑ ΕΤΩΩ̇ ΜΝ
11 ΤΕΚΜΝΤΑΓΔΘΟC ΕΤΝΔΩΩĊ
12 ΜΑΡΝΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ 2ΗΤΚ̇ 2Ν̇ ΟΥΟΥ-
13 ΩΝ2̇ ΕΒΟΛ̇ ΝΘΕ ΕΝΤΑΚΑΔΑΝ Ν-
14 ΚΟΙΝΩΝΟC ΕΠΕΚCΩΜΑ̇ ΜΝ
15 ΠΕΚCΝΟ4 ΕΤΟΥΟΝ2̇ ΕΒΟΛ
16 2ΙΧΜ̇ ΠΚΔ2̇

verso

- 17 ΜΑΡΝΚΟΙΝΩΝΕΙ [ΟΝ] ΕΤΕΚ[ΜΝ̇ΤΕΡΟ]
18 Ε[Τ2Ν̇ Τ]ΠΕ̇ ΤΔΙ ΝΤ[ΔΚΧΑΡΙΖΕ ΜΜΟC Ν-]
19 [Ν]ΕΚΠΕΤ[ΟΥΔΔΒ ca. 15]
20 ΧΑΡΙΖΕ ΜΜ[ca. 17]ΤΟΥ-
21 ΔΔΒ [ΧΕ] ΠΩ[Κ ΠΕ ΠΕΟΟΥ̇ ΜΝ̇ ΠΑΜΑ2ΤΕ (?) ΩΔ Ε-]
22 [Ν]Ε[2] ΝΕΝΕ2 2Δ[ΜΗΝ]



O.CrumVC 2 front (Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, Coptic. Inscr. 472)
@ Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford



O.CrumVC 2 back (Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, Coptic. Inscr. 472)
@ Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford

5-6. μετάνοια 6. θρόνος 6-7. ⲙⲛⲣⲓⲧⲥⲧⲓⲟⲛ ed.pr. 9. ἀνομία
11. ἀγαθός 14. κοινωνός; σῶμα 17. κοινωνεῖν 17. χαρίζειν 20.
χαρίζειν

1. Ps 30:5b 1-2. Gen 21:32 2. 1 Tim 6:15/Rev 19:16 3-4. Ps 38:12
5-6. Ps 140:2 6-7. Ps 43:10 8. Ps 43:9a 9-10. Ps 30:2 10. 1 Pet 1:3
12-13. Ps 94:2

Lord of truth, eternal God, King of kings, hear our (prayer) and our entreaty. May our voice (come) to you, may our repentance ⁵ attain (to) your throne, may the lifting of (our) hands come to your presence. Do not repel us from your presence because of our sins, do not put us to shame because of our iniquities. Hasten and incline your ear ¹⁰ to us in your plentiful mercy and your abundant goodness. May we come to meet you in confession. As you have made us partakers of your body and ¹⁵ your blood, revealed upon earth, so we may also partake in your (kingdom) in heaven, that which (you have granted) to your saints... ²⁰ grant?... saint... (for) yours (is the glory and the power?) forever and ever, amen.

1. [ⲛⲭⲟⲉⲓ]ϥ ⲛⲧⲙⲉ: Cf. Ps 30:5b ⲁⲕⲥⲱⲧⲉ ⲙⲙⲟⲓ ⲛⲭⲟⲉⲓⲥ ⲛⲛⲟϥⲧⲉ ⲛⲧⲙⲉ “you have redeemed me, O Lord, God of truth”.²⁹ The reconstruction is based on O.Torino inv. 7138.

1-2. ⲛⲛⲟϥⲧⲉ ⲛⲱⲗ [ⲉⲛⲉⲛ]: Cf. Gen 21:32 ⲁⲩⲉⲛⲓⲕⲁⲗⲉⲓ ⲙⲡⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲙⲙⲁϥ ⲙⲡⲣⲁⲛ ⲙⲡⲭⲟⲉⲓⲥ ⲛⲛⲟϥⲧⲉ ⲛⲱⲗ ⲉⲛⲉⲛ “he called on the name of the Lord, the eternal God”.³⁰ The clause ‘eternal God’ is furthermore attested in Isa. 40:28 and Rom. 16:26, however, in the Sahidic translation of Isa. 40:28 it is rendered as ⲛⲛⲟϥⲧⲉ ⲛⲱⲗ ⲉⲛⲉⲛ

29 E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Earliest Known Coptic Psalter: The Text, in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*, K. Paul, London 1898, 31.

30 Louis Th. Lefort, *Les manuscrits coptes de l'Université Louvain*, Vol. I *Textes littéraires*, Louvain 1940, 11.

in Coptic,³¹ and in the witness of Rom. 16:26 the clause is in the lacuna.³² The reconstruction is based on O. Torino inv. 7138.

2. $\overline{\eta\rho\rho\omicron}^{\wedge} \overline{\eta\eta\rho\rho\omega\omicron\gamma}$: Cf. the epithet of Jesus “King of kings and Lord of lords” reported in 1 Tim 6:15 and Rev 19:16. The Sahidic is a verbatim equivalent of the Bible verses.³³

3-4. $\overline{\varsigma\omega\tau\mu} \overline{[\epsilon]\eta\epsilon[\eta\omega\lambda\eta\lambda]} \overline{m\eta} \overline{\eta\epsilon\eta\varsigma\omicron\eta\varsigma}$: Cf. Ps 38:12 $\overline{\varsigma\omega\tau\mu} \overline{\epsilon\pi\alpha\omega\lambda\eta\lambda} \overline{m\eta} \overline{\eta\alpha\omega\eta\varsigma}$ “hear my prayer and my entreaty”.³⁴

5-6. $\overline{m\alpha\rho\epsilon\eta\chi\iota} \overline{[\epsilon]z[\rho]\alpha\iota} \overline{\eta[\eta\epsilon\eta]\varsigma[\iota]\chi} \overline{\epsilon\iota} \overline{m\eta\epsilon\kappa\mu\tau\omicron} \overline{\epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda}$: Cf. Ps 140:2 $\overline{m\alpha\rho\epsilon\pi\alpha\omega\lambda\eta\lambda} \overline{\varsigma\omicron\omicron\gamma\tau\eta} \overline{\eta\theta\epsilon} \overline{\eta\omicron\gamma\omega\gamma\omicron\gamma} \overline{z\eta\eta\epsilon} \overline{m\eta\epsilon\kappa\mu\tau\omicron} \overline{\epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda}$ $\overline{\eta\chi\iota} \overline{\eta\eta\alpha\delta\iota\chi} \overline{\epsilon\epsilon\rho\alpha\iota} \overline{\eta\theta\epsilon} \overline{\eta\omicron\gamma\theta\gamma\varsigma\iota\alpha} \overline{m\eta\eta\alpha\gamma} \overline{\eta\rho\omicron\gamma\zeta\epsilon}$ “Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice”.³⁵

7-8. $\overline{m}[\overline{\eta\eta}]\overline{\kappa\tau\omicron\eta} \overline{\epsilon\pi\alpha\zeta\omicron\gamma} \overline{m\eta\epsilon\kappa\mu\tau\omicron} \overline{\epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda}$: Cf. Ps 43:10 $\overline{\alpha\kappa\kappa\tau\omicron\eta} \overline{\epsilon\pi\alpha\zeta\omicron\gamma} \overline{\eta\alpha\rho\alpha} \overline{\eta\epsilon\eta\chi\alpha\chi\epsilon}$ “you make us turn back from the enemy”,³⁶ which, together with the previous verse of the Psalm, seems to have inspired this clause and the next.

8. $\overline{m\eta\eta\rho}^{\dagger} \overline{\omega\eta\eta\epsilon} \overline{\eta\alpha\eta}$: Cf. Ps 43:9a $\overline{\alpha\kappa}^{\dagger} \overline{\omega\eta\eta\epsilon} \overline{\eta\alpha\eta}$ “you have put us to shame”.

9-10. $\overline{\epsilon\epsilon\eta\eta} \overline{\rho\iota\kappa\epsilon} \overline{m\eta\epsilon\kappa\mu[\alpha]\alpha\chi\epsilon} \overline{\epsilon\rho\omicron\eta}$: The request $\overline{\rho\iota\kappa\epsilon} \overline{m\eta\epsilon\kappa\mu\alpha\alpha\chi\epsilon}$ “incline your ear” addressed to God is frequent in the Psalms, for this see in particular Ps 30:2 $\overline{\rho\iota\kappa\epsilon} \overline{m\eta\epsilon\kappa\mu\alpha\alpha\chi\epsilon} \overline{\epsilon\rho\omicron\iota}$ $\overline{\eta\gamma\epsilon\eta\eta} \overline{\epsilon\tau\omicron\gamma\chi\omicron\iota}$ “bow down your ear to me, deliver me speedily”.³⁷ The expression also appears in inclination prayers, where it is usually

31 A. Ciasca, *Sacrorum Bibliorum fragmenta Copto-Sahidica Musei Borgiani*, 2 vols. Roma 1885/1889, vol 2, 239.

32 G. W. Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Southern Dialect*, 7 vols. Clarendon Press, Oxford 1911-1924, vol. 4, 158.

33 Cf. G. W. Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Southern Dialect*, vol. 5, 486 and vol. 7, 494.

34 E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Earliest Known Coptic Psalter*, 44.

35 Ibid., 146.

36 Ibid., 48.

37 Ibid., 31.

combined with a reference to the congregation's inclination of the head, see e.g. the inclination before communion prayers in P.Bad. IV 58 fol. 1, 1-4 σοὶ ἔκλινα(ν) οἱ δοῦλοί σου καὶ αἱ δοῦλαι τὰς κεφαλὰς· κλῖν[ο]ν αὐτοῖς τὸ οὖς σου “your servants and handmaids have bent their heads to you: bend them your ear”, and O. Crum 6, 5-6 ρικε μπεκμααχε πχοε[ic] n̄gcωtm̄ ep̄on ̄a[non] net̄owax̄ ep̄ech̄t̄ nak̄ n̄<n̄>n̄ap̄h̄ȳc̄ “bend your ear, Lord, and listen to us, who bow our heads to you”.³⁸

10-11. 2m̄ peknā etow̄ mn̄ tek̄mn̄taḡathoc̄ et̄naw̄oc̄: Cf. 1 Pet 1:3 πατὴρ τὰ χάριτον κατὰ πλεονά εὐνοίας “he who has given us birth according to his great mercy”.³⁹

12-13. μαρνεὶ εβολ̄ 2ht̄k̄ 2n̄ ōyoḡwn̄2̄ εβολ̄: Cf. Ps 94:2 μαρνεὶ βολ̄ 2ht̄q̄ 2n̄ ōyoḡwn̄2̄ εβολ̄ “let us come to meet him in confession”,⁴⁰ where ōyoḡwn̄2̄ εβολ̄ translates the Septuagint's ἐξομολόγησις.

13-19. Requests for eternal life among the fruits of communion are commonplace in oriental prayers, but they usually fit into a longer enumeration of benefits. A close and more exclusive connection between the two is less frequent. The combination of a reference to communion and a request to allow the congregation a lot with the saints is present in the thanksgiving after communion prayer of the Syriac anaphora of St. James⁴¹ as well as in the thanksgiving after communion of the Syriac anaphora of Gregory Adhorbigam.⁴² A similar close connection between communion and eternal life

38 Á. T. Mihálykó, “Writing the Christian Liturgy in Egypt (3rd to 9th century)”, 224-225

39 G. W. Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Southern Dialect*, vol. 7, 2.

40 E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Earliest Known Coptic Psalter*, 102.

41 F. E. Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, Oxford 1896, 104.

42 *Anaphorae Syriacae quotquot in codicibus adhuc repertae sunt*, 3 vols, Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, Roma 1939-1981, II.2, 229.

is also attested in the final benediction of the Syriac anaphora of Gregory of Nazianzus.⁴³ The present prayer provides an elegant and rhetorical wording for the *topos* with the *figura etymologica* of κοινωνός – κοινωνεῖν and the *antithesis* of “on earth” and “in heaven”.

17-19. The reconstruction is based on the parallel of O.Torino inv. 7138. The writing is mostly faded except for the first word of l. 17.

18-19. ΕΤΕΚ[ΜΝΤΕΡΟ] Ε[Τ2Ν Τ]ΠΕ: The clause appears to be a variant of the biblical expression “the kingdom of heavens” ΤΜΝΤΡΡΟ ΝΜΠΗΥΕ, used in particular by Matthew (3:2 etc.), which was modified to match the expression “on earth” in the previous clause.

19-21. The script is almost completely faded. Based on the visible letters, it may be assumed that after [Ν]ΕΚΠΕΤ[ΟΥΔΔΒ] the scribe, perhaps accidentally, repeated the last line of the prayer as it stands on O.Torino inv. 7138. If this hypothesis is correct, the text may be reconstructed as [ΤΑΙ ΝΤΑΚ]|ΧΑΡΙΖΕ ΜΜ[ΟC ΝΝΕΚΠΕΤ]ΟΥΔΔΒ. However, this would leave us with shorter lines than expected, which can be explained with either additional erroneous repetitions, or with the unevenness of the surface that forced the scribe to avoid some parts of it. Or else a different text stood here that was added to the wording preserved on O.Torino inv. 7138, but which cannot be reconstructed due to the lack of parallels.

21-22. The doxology was omitted on O.Torino inv. 7138 and is much faded on O.CrumVC 2, therefore its reconstruction runs into difficulties. It was probably one of the shortest options, e.g., ΧΕ ΤΩΚ ΤΕ Τ6ΟΜ ΜΝ ΠΕΟΟΥ “yours is the power and the glory” (cf. P.Bal. I 30, fol. 9a R, 11-12) or ΠΩΚ ΠΕ ΠΕΟΟΥ ΜΝ ΠΑΜΑ2ΤΕ “yours is the glory and the power” (cf. P.Bal. I 30, fol. 9b R, 6-7). Of these, the latter seems to fit the traces better, though it is somewhat long for the available space. Thus, it is possible that instead of ΠΕΟΟΥ and ΠΑΜΑ2ΤΕ, which are the customary nouns of the doxology in late antique Egypt, different words were used (ΠΕΟΟΥ ΜΝ Τ6ΟΜ?).

43 *Anaphorae Syriacae quotquot in codicibus adhuc repertae sunt*, 3 vols, I.2, 145.

2. O.Torino inv. 7138

Western Thebes 25 × 21 cm early VII (?)

Turin, Museo Egizio inv. Cat. 7138

ED.PR. Francesco Rossi, *Di alcuni cocci copti del Museo Egiziano di Torino. Estr. dagli Atti della R. Accademia delle Scienze di Torino, Vol. XXX.* Carlo Clausen, Torino 1895, 7-9, No. 3.

CAT. www.trismegistos.org TM No. 959785, Á. T. Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, No. 116

Fragment of a large plate covered with a smooth englobe. It was reassembled from three fragments, with an additional smaller piece missing from ll. 6-8. For the rest the text is complete, apart from some faded letters in ll. 7-11. The exterior, concave surface of the plate is not inscribed. The scribe started tight on the upper edge, leaving only ca. 0.5 cm empty, and filled the available space both to the right and the left. At the bottom left side he left ca. 6 cm empty; at the same time he wrote the end of the last line in small, crammed letters. This arrangement was probably needed because the larger chunk at the bottom of the plate was already missing at the time of the inscription of the item, and the scribe did not want the text to extend below the line created by the break. He started and ended the text with a cross and the first letter is enlarged, but no other unit division markers were used.

The text is written in a competent hand that drew small, informal, and uneven sloping majuscules. The inclination to the right is moderate and the letter forms are rounded, though ε and c can sometimes be narrow and o can be small, almost like a dot. ϡ is made both with three and with four strokes. Η is cursive and Β is large. Χ tilts to the left in l. 1 and 15. The writing resembles closely that of P.Mon.Epiph. 175 (see pl. xiii of the volume), a letter addressed to John and Enoch, the inhabitants of the hermitage at the very beginning of the seventh

century,⁴⁴ as well as O.Saint-Marc 50 (fig. 68 and 69), a letter addressed to the priest Mark of the *topos* of St. Mark, who was also active at the turn of the sixth and seventh centuries.⁴⁵ These parallels advocate a date into the early seventh century, though due to the conservative writing styles in the region the later decades of the seventh or the early eighth century cannot be excluded entirely.

The language is a regular Sahidic; the Ⲉ of the verbal base ⲙⲁⲣⲛ- is spelled out. The scribe employs superlinear strokes only twice: a connective stroke in l. 4 over ⲙⲟⲛⲥ and a short one in l. 11 over ⲛⲉⲕⲛⲁ to separate the final vowel from the initial vowel of the next word (though other strokes may have faded).

The ostrakon was acquired by the Museo Egizio before 1882. No provenance was recorded, but among the other six Coptic ostraca of the collection there is a letter to the hermit Frange, inhabitant of TT 29 (inv. 7136, F. Rossi, *Di alcuni cocci copti del Museo Egiziano di Torino*, 4-6 no. 2), which was equally acquired before 1882, probably together with inv. 7138.⁴⁶ This, along with the attestation of the same prayer on O.CrumVC 2, also of likely Theban provenance, makes it probable that this ostrakon also comes from the Western Theban hermitages or from the wider surroundings.

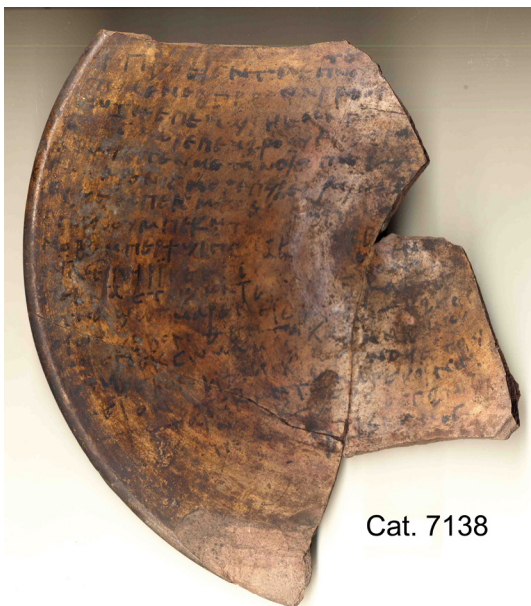
- 1 ⲧⲓ ⲛⲁⲟⲉⲓⲥ ⲛⲧⲙⲉ ⲛⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ/
- 2 ⲛⲱⲗ ⲉⲛⲉⲛⲛⲣⲟ ⲛⲛⲣⲣⲓⲱⲟⲩ
- 3 ⲙⲱⲧⲙ ⲉⲛⲉⲛⲱⲗⲏⲗ ⲙⲛ ⲛⲉⲛ-

44 Renate Dekker, *A Relative Chronology of the Topos of Epiphanius: The Identification of its Leaders*, in Paola Buzi – Alberto Camplani – Federico Contardi (eds.), *Coptic Society, Literature and Religion, from Late Antiquity to Modern Times: Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Coptic Studies, Rome, September 17th-22nd, 2012, and Plenary Reports of the Ninth International Congress of Coptic Studies, Cairo, September 15th-19th, 2008*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 247, Peeters, Leuven 2016, 755-767, 766.

45 R. Dekker, *Episcopal Networks and Authority in Late Antique Egypt*, 111-113.

46 I thank the information on the acquisition of both ostraca to Suzanne Töpfer (via e-mail on 01/03/2018).

4 ϣⲟⲡϥ ⲙⲁⲣⲉⲡⲉⲛⲁⲣⲟⲟϥ ⲉⲓ ϣⲁⲣⲟ-
 5 ⲕ ⲙⲁⲣⲉⲧⲉⲛⲙⲉⲧⲁⲛⲟⲓⲁ ⲡⲱⲁ ϣⲁ
 6 ⲡⲉⲕⲟⲣⲟⲛⲟϥ ⲙⲁⲣⲉⲡⲓ ⲉⲁⲣⲁⲓ ⲛⲛⲉ[ⲛ-]
 7 ⲉⲓϭ ⲉⲓ ⲙⲡⲉⲕⲙⲧⲟ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲙⲡⲣⲕⲧ[ⲟⲛ]
 8 ⲉⲡⲁⲁⲟϥ ⲙⲡⲉⲕⲙⲧⲟ ⲉⲃ[ⲟⲗ ⲉ]ⲧⲃⲉ ⲛⲉⲛ-
 9 ⲛⲟⲃⲉ ⲙⲡⲣⲧ ϣⲡⲉ ⲛⲁⲛ [ⲉⲧ]ⲃⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲛ[ⲟ]-
 10 ⲙⲓⲁ ⲃⲉⲡⲏ ⲣⲓⲕⲉ ⲙⲡⲉⲕⲙⲁ[ⲁϭ]ⲉ ⲉⲣⲟⲛ ⲁⲙ
 11 ⲡⲉⲕⲛⲁ ⲉⲧⲟϣ ⲙⲛ ⲧⲉⲕ[ⲙⲛ]ⲧⲁⲓⲁⲑⲟϥ
 12 ⲉⲧⲛⲁϣⲱϥ ⲙⲁⲣⲉⲛⲉⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲁⲛⲧⲕ ⲁⲛ ⲟϥ-
 13 ⲟϥⲱⲛⲁ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲟⲉ ⲛⲧⲁⲕⲁⲁⲛ ⲛⲕⲟⲓⲛⲱ-
 14 ⲛⲟϥ ⲉⲡⲉⲕϣⲱⲙⲁ ⲙⲛ ⲡⲉⲕϥⲛⲟϥ ⲉⲧⲟϥ-
 15 ϣⲛⲁ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲁⲓϭⲙ ⲡⲕⲁⲁ ⲙⲁⲣⲉ<ⲛ>ⲕⲟⲓⲛⲱ-
 16 ⲛⲉⲓ ⲟⲛ ⲉⲧⲉⲕⲙⲛⲧ[ⲧ]ⲉⲣⲟ ⲉⲧⲁⲛ
 17 ⲧⲡⲉ ⲧⲁⲓ ⲛⲧⲁⲕϭⲁⲣⲓⲁⲉ ⲙⲙⲟϥ
 18 ⲛⲛⲉⲕⲡⲉⲧⲟϥⲁⲃ ⲧ



Cat. 7138

O.Torino inv. 7138 front @ Museo Egizio, Turin. Image courtesy of Susanne Töpfer

2. corr. ex ΝΝΡΟΟΥ 5. μετάνοια 6. θρόνος 6-7. ΝΝ[ΕΚΩΘ]ΕΙΧ
ed.pr. 9-10. ἀνομία 12. ἀγαθός 13-14. κοινωνός 14. σῶμα 15-16.
κοινωνεῖν 17. χαρίζειν

Abstract

Dieser Artikel bietet eine neue, verbesserte Veröffentlichung von zwei Ostraca aus der Sammlung des Museo Egizio, Torino/Turin und aus dem Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Diese Ostraca stammen aus dem 7. oder 8. Jahrhundert aus der Klosterlandschaft von Theben-West oder Umgebung und beide Ostraca beinhalten das gleiche sahidische Segensgebet vor der Entlassung der Gemeinde am Ende der Messfeier. Das Gebet ist aus anderen Quellen nicht bekannt, aber es ist bemerkenswert, dass es sich an Christus richtet, was wahrscheinlich auf syrischen Einfluss zurückzuführen ist.



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