

## THE SAHIDIC VERSION OF JACOB OF SERUGH'S *MEMRĀ* ON THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST\*

### *Introduction*

The literary heritage of Jacob of Serugh (452-521 CE) is a broad one and is located mainly in Syriac, albeit a significant number of his *mēmre* is transmitted in other languages, notably in Arabic and Ḡəʿəz<sup>1</sup>, and occasionally in Armenian<sup>2</sup> and Georgian<sup>3</sup>. The fame of Jacob was great in Egypt, as attested by numerous Arabic manuscripts of Coptic and Melkite provenance which contain his works<sup>4</sup>. Although it is certain that Jacob of Serugh was esteemed in Egypt, none of his writings has been known to survive in Coptic until now. Therefore, the discovery of the Sahidic version of his *memrā* on the Ascension of Christ<sup>5</sup>, which is introduced in this article, represents the first evidence of the circulation of his writings in Coptic. In the following pages, I will offer a description of the two Sahidic manuscripts in which this *memrā* is preserved and then I will analyze a few peculiar features of the Coptic version. Finally, the questions of the date of the Sahidic translation, its *Vorlage* and original language of the translator will be addressed.

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<sup>1</sup> A partial list of Jacob of Serugh's homilies in Ethiopic can be found in WITAKOWSKI, *Jacob of Serug*.

<sup>2</sup> All the homilies of Jacob which have survived in Armenian are transmitted under Ephrem's name, *On the Annunciation I* (TASNAPETEAN, Տիրաճալր, p. 58-63), *On the Annunciation II* (TASNAPETEAN, Տիրաճալր, p. 64-69), *On John the Baptist* (see BHO 487), *On Stephen the Protomartyr* (see BHO 1095), *On the Resurrection and the Soldiers that Guarded the Tomb* (TASNAPETEAN, Յխնալի, p. 403-417).

<sup>3</sup> In Georgian has survived under Jacob's name only the *memrā* on the Nativity, which is preserved in a single manuscript, Tbilisi A-19, dated around 970 CE; translated in PATARIDZE, *Jacques de Saroug*. The *memrā* on Elias and the Archangel Michael is preserved under the name of Ephrem in another *unicum*, Tbilisi A-144; French translation by Bernard Outtier in *Le saint prophète Élie*, p. 433-451.

<sup>4</sup> GRAF, *GCAL*, p. 444-452. Cf. also SAMIR, *Jacques de Saroug*. The earliest Arabic manuscripts containing his works came from the Byzantine Monastery of St. Catherine at Sinai, although Jacob's memory was eventually banned in the Melkite community.

<sup>5</sup> BROCK, *Isaac of Antioch, Jacob of Serugh, and Narsai*, p. 286 (= no. 81). The Syriac text of this homily was edited in BEDJAN, *S. Martyrii*, p. 808-832. Bedjan's Syriac text has been republished and translated into English in KOLLAMPARAMPIL, *Homily on the Ascension*.

### 1. *The Sahidic Manuscripts of the Memrā on the Ascension*

The Sahidic text of Jacob's homily on the Ascension is transmitted by two fragmentary parchment codices, both from the Monastery of Apa Shenoute, or the White Monastery, as it is most commonly called, situated in Upper Egypt near the ancient town of Atripe.

Four folios have survived from the first manuscript (Codex A). They are kept today in the National Library in Paris and the French Institute for Oriental Archaeology (IFAO) in Cairo<sup>6</sup>:

Paris, BnF Copte 130<sup>5</sup>, f. 35 = *On the Ascension*, verses 35-67

Paris, BnF Copte 131<sup>5</sup>, f. 33 = *On the Ascension*, verses 71-100

Cairo, IFAO copte inv. no. 205 = *On the Ascension*, verses 175-207a

Paris, BnF Copte 130<sup>5</sup>, f. 36 = *On the Ascension*, verses 207b-246

The pages of this codex accommodate the text in two columns, which vary between 33 and 36 lines. Although some traces of the original pagination are still occasionally visible, the ink is faded, so much so that no page number can be restored. However, the comparison against the Syriac version furnishes important codicological information: 1) the homily commenced three pages before the recto of the first surviving fragment (BnF Copte 130<sup>5</sup>, f. 35)<sup>7</sup>; 2) two folios have disappeared between BnF Copte 131<sup>5</sup>, f. 33 and IFAO copte inv. no. 205. There are arguments that the fragments BnF Copte 130<sup>5</sup>, f. 35-36, on one hand, and BnF Copte 131<sup>5</sup>, f. 33-IFAO copte inv. no. 205, on the other, were originally joint leaves. This suggests that all the four leaves identified until now belonged to the same quire, being its second and third bifolios. If this hypothesis is correct, the innermost bifolio of the quire was formed of the two leaves missing between BnF Copte 131<sup>5</sup>, f. 33 and IFAO copte inv. no. 205, which are either lost or have not yet been identified. No other fragments of this codex are known to survive.

The size of the folios is approximately 33 × 24 cm<sup>8</sup>. The letters are small, with occasional enlarged capitals at the beginning of the paragraphs. The overall aspect of the pages is sober, without any significant decorative marks. The supralineation system is standard, although the scribe used dots instead of lines. The portions of the manuscript identified

<sup>6</sup> The same fragments have already been mentioned as belonging to this codex in LOUIS, *Catalogue IFAO*, p. 511.

<sup>7</sup> This corresponds to six columns of text. Much of the first column must have been occupied by a long title, as the late Sahidic manuscripts usually have.

<sup>8</sup> This is the size of the IFAO fragment as given by LOUIS, *Catalogue IFAO*, p. 511.

until now do not contain any paleographical feature which would possibly suggest a date for its manufacture<sup>9</sup>. All one can sensibly say about the date of this codex is that it could hardly be assigned before the 10th century CE.

With the sole exception of IFAO copte inv. no. 205, which has been edited and translated into French by Catherine Louis<sup>10</sup>, the other three leaves are published here for the first time. Notably, Émile Amélineau has tentatively attributed the two fragments BnF Copte 130<sup>5</sup>, f. 35-36 to Shenoute of Atripe<sup>11</sup>. This hypothesis is now dismissed by their correct identification as parts of the Sahidic version of the *memrā* on the Ascension by Jacob of Serugh.

At least seven parchment fragments have survived from a second Sahidic manuscript (Codex B – MONB.OT<sup>12</sup>) of Jacob's homily:

Cairo, Coptic Museum no. 8013<sup>13</sup>

Paris, BnF Copte 131<sup>8</sup>, f. 99

Ann Arbor, Michigan University 158.37<sup>14</sup> + Cairo, Coptic Museum *sine numero*<sup>15</sup>

Paris, BnF Copte 133<sup>2</sup>, frag. 288<sup>16</sup>

Paris, BnF Copte 132<sup>1</sup>, f. 61v-r

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Copt. d. 187c(P)

<sup>9</sup> The date of most of the Coptic manuscripts is impossible to establish paleographically because dated or datable comparanda are lacking, see LAYTON, *Coptic Paleography*.

<sup>10</sup> LOUIS, *Catalogue IFAO*, p. 512-514.

<sup>11</sup> The entire volume 130<sup>5</sup> was considered by Amélineau to contain fragments of Shenoute's writings, cf. AMÉLINEAU, *Catalogue* (unpublished catalogue available in the Département des manuscrits orientaux of the National Library in Paris). However, Stephen Emmel included these two fragments among the uncertain ones in his study of the manuscripts containing the works of Shenoute, see EMMEL, *SLC*, p. 903.

<sup>12</sup> The siglum MONB.OT is ascribed to this manuscript in the *Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari* (CMCL) database, available at <http://www.cmcl.it/> [retrieved 2015/01].

<sup>13</sup> Described in CRUM, *Coptic Monuments*, p. 6-7.

<sup>14</sup> The codicological connection between the Michigan fragment and Cairo 8013 is mentioned in an unpublished typewritten checklist of the Coptic manuscripts in the Michigan University collection, which can be consulted *in situ*. I am not aware who is the author of this checklist, but it seems to be based on Walter Ewing Crum's notes on the Michigan fragments.

<sup>15</sup> This fragment was formerly in the possession of the Coptic Patriarchate and later transferred to the Coptic Museum. Therefore, it is not mentioned in the two catalogues of this collection available to date, CRUM, *Coptic Monuments* and MUNIER, *Manuscripts coptes*.

<sup>16</sup> BnF Copte 133<sup>2</sup>, frag. 288 is too small to allow a proper identification of its content. However, the flesh side certainly features verse 375 and the first word of verse 376. Only verse 375 has been retained for the present edition. Other fragments in the same scribe's hand, and probably pertaining to the same codex, are BnF Copte 133<sup>2</sup>, frags. 286a-287, 289-290.

All Codex B's fragments are palimpsest. The text of Jacob's homily is the newer writing and it is copied in a crude hand. The vestiges of this codex are more badly damaged than those of the previous manuscript, so much so that they preserve only small portions of text. The only significant fragment in terms of size is Cairo, Coptic Museum 8013, whose entire text parallels Paris, BnF Copte 130<sup>5</sup>, f. 35 in Codex A. The parts where the two fragments overlap are so similar that we may suppose not only that they belong to the same Sahidic translation, but also that one manuscript is a copy of the other. If this assumption is correct, one should expect that Codex A is earlier and served as a model for Codex B. It is likely that the palimpsest was produced in the scriptorium of the Monastery of Apa Shenoute, and that its scribe copied the text from another manuscript located in the library.

Despite their damage, two of the aforementioned fragments are of prime importance as they provide important codicological details. Firstly, Paris, BnF Copte 131<sup>8</sup>, f. 99 still bears the page numbers 13-14, indicating that Jacob of Serugh's homily was the first text of the codex. Secondly, the recto of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Copt. d. 187c(P) contains a portion from verses 473-474, while its verso has vestiges of two columns of text copied in a different handwriting. Although only a few letters are legible, it is clear that the verso contained the closing colophon of the manuscript, which indicates that Codex B featured only the *memrā* on the Ascension by Jacob of Serugh.

Stray fragments of another palimpsest inscribed by the same copyist are identifiable. The second manuscript of this scribe contained portions from John Chrysostom's homilies on the Epistle to the Hebrews (CPG 4440)<sup>17</sup>. From the fact that the text of the fragments pertaining to the homily of Jacob is in two columns, while that of Chrysostom's sermons on the Epistle to the Hebrews is in a single one, emerges plainly that the surviving manuscript vestiges must be organized in distinct codices.

Paris, BnF Copte 131<sup>7</sup>, f. 68 = unidentified<sup>18</sup>

Cairo, IFAO inv. no. 226 = John Chrysostom, *In Ep. ad Heb., hom. 16*<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> On the content of this codex see SUCIU, *Borgian Coptic Manuscripts*, p. 324-325; LOUIS, *Catalogue IFAO*, p. 439 (= no. 99); the list below supplies some additions to these two directories of fragments.

<sup>18</sup> LUCCHESI, *Répertoire*, p. 83. According to Lucchesi, this fragment might also belong to Chrysostom's series of homilies on Hebrews.

<sup>19</sup> Edited and translated into French in LOUIS, *Catalogue IFAO*, p. 440-441. The fragment is not identified in Louis' catalogue, but its verso corresponds to PG 63, col. 125. It is interesting to note that the recto of the IFAO fragment contains the title of the homily

- Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale I.B.16, f. 20-23 (= p. 95-102) = John Chrysostom, *In Ep. ad Heb., hom. 17*<sup>20</sup>
- Paris, BnF Copte 131<sup>5</sup>, f. 87 (= p. [107]-108) = John Chrysostom, *In Ep. ad Heb., hom. 18*<sup>21</sup>
- Paris, BnF Copte 132<sup>1</sup>, f. 88<sup>22</sup> + Paris, BnF Copte 132<sup>4</sup>, f. 285 (= p. 115-116) = John Chrysostom, *In Ep. ad Heb., hom. 18*
- Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek K 2607 = unidentified
- Paris, BnF Copte 132<sup>4</sup>, f. 287 = unidentified
- Oslo, University Library, frag. 47 piece 2<sup>23</sup> = unidentified
- Oslo, University Library, frag. 51 piece 6 = unidentified
- Paris, BnF Copte 133<sup>2</sup>, frags. 287, 289-290<sup>24</sup> = unidentified

The only underlying writing deciphered until now is that of the Naples fragments of John Chrysostom, which was edited by Arnold van Lantschoot<sup>25</sup>. For his part, van Lantschoot tentatively dated this palimpsest to the 10th-11th century, but this is hardly more than a guess since no datable comparanda are available.

Despite their fragmentary state, Codex A and B contain a significant number of the 486 metrical verses that form Jacob's homily on the Ascension. The present edition features the following 162 verses, which are more or less legible or can be reconstructed at least partly with some degree of certitude: 35-67, 71-92, 96-100, 157-159, 162-167, 175-197, 201-246, 278-295, 375-376, 415-417, 433-435. As the first line preserved in Sahidic corresponds to verse 35 of the Syriac original, and the last one to verse 474<sup>26</sup>, we may safely infer that the entire *memrā* on the Ascension has been translated into Sahidic and not only an excerpt. The fact that much of the text is lost is due to the poor preservation of the two manuscripts extant.

("On the celestial life") whereas its verso features a portion of the 16<sup>th</sup> homily on Hebrews, which is situated somewhere in the middle of the Greek text. Thus, the Sahidic version is rather an extract which starts with §3 of the homily.

<sup>20</sup> Formerly in the Vatican collection, these folios are described in ZOEGA, *Catalogus*, p. 641-642; BUZI, *Catalogo*, p. 332-333.

<sup>21</sup> LUCCHESI, *Répertoire*, p. 80. Published in BOURIANT, *Rapport*, p. 407-408.

<sup>22</sup> LUCCHESI, *Répertoire*, p. 86.

<sup>23</sup> LUNDHAUG – SUCIU, *Checklist*.

<sup>24</sup> At least theoretically, any of these three fragments can belong to Jacob's sermon, although their small size impedes identification.

<sup>25</sup> VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Panegyrique de S. Jean-Baptiste*.

<sup>26</sup> Verses 473-474 feature on the recto of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Copt. d. 187c(P). For example, the word  $\lambda\eta\rho\iota\omega\mathfrak{n}$  in verse 473 is readable on line 4 of the Oxford fragment's recto. However, these verses have not been retained for the present edition as the fragment is heavily damaged.

2. *Peculiar Features of the Sahidic Version of the Memrā on the Ascension: A Translation Intended for an Egyptian Audience*

The surviving vestiges of the Sahidic version of Jacob of Serugh's homily on the Ascension attest numerous minor differences from the Syriac original. However, their value is difficult to determine because we do not possess as yet an edition of this text based on a sufficient number of manuscripts<sup>27</sup>. Paul Bedjan used for his publication of the Syriac text only two codices, namely Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Syr. 196<sup>28</sup> and London, British Library, Or. Add. 12165<sup>29</sup>. In addition to Syriac, the *memrā* on the Ascension is attested also in Arabic and Gə'əz (see *Addendum*, p. 63). The Arabic version is included in a devotional Coptic book published in Cairo in 1905 but, unfortunately, it does not mention which manuscript follows<sup>30</sup>. The monks of the St. Macarius Monastery in Wadi el-Natrun have privately circulated a handwritten Arabic transcript of the homily that interests us here. This transcription is of some interest as it is partly based on the two Arabic manuscripts of Jacob of Serugh's homilies in the library of the monastery (nos. 333-334)<sup>31</sup>. However, one must use it with caution because it intersperses the text of the original manuscripts with modern translations into Arabic from the Syriac text of Bedjan, without notifying the reader when such mixtures occur.

The lack of proper editions hampers the comparison between the Coptic, Syriac, and Arabic text. In spite of this, this endeavor is not without relevance. One can detect various dissimilarities, from minor additions and omissions to more significant alterations of the meaning of the phrase. Usually, the average number of words per addition and omission is small. In most cases, just one word is missing, although sometimes a verse can lack a whole clause. As these *variae lectiones* are of relatively minor importance, it is not the purpose of this paper to give a full account of them. Suffice to say that the Syriac and the Arabic texts generally agree

<sup>27</sup> A rich inventory of Syriac manuscripts containing Jacob of Serugh's homily on the Ascension can be conveniently found in VÖÖBUS, *Ja'qōb von Serūg*, vol. 2, p. 16-17, 34-35, 48-49, 52-53, 68-69, 70-71, 78-79, 86-87, 90-91, 96-97, 102-103, 108-109, 118-119, 128-129, 138-139, 154-155, 160-161, 176-177, 182-183, 196-197; vol. 4, p. 14-15, 30-31, 60-61, 80-81, 84-85.

<sup>28</sup> Description of the manuscript in ZOTENBERG, *Catalogues*, p. 140-144 (= no. 196).

<sup>29</sup> This codex is dated 1015 CE. Described in WRIGHT, *Catalogue*, p. 840-851 (= no. 824). See also SAUGET, *British Library Add. 12165*.

<sup>30</sup> ATANĀSIYŪS, كتاب, p. 635-645 (with Arabic numerals). A translation from Syriac into modern Arabic can be found in SONY, يعقوب السروجي, p. 2811-2823 (with Arabic numerals).

<sup>31</sup> The manuscripts 333 and 334 of the Monastery of St. Macarius are dated 1870 CE and 1773 CE respectively. Description in ZANETTI, *Inventaire*, p. 47-48.

against the Sahidic (cf. e.g. verses 46, 49, 62, 188), excluding thus from the outset the possibility that the Arabic translation could be made from the Coptic, albeit both circulated on Egyptian soil. Only in a few cases (e.g. verses 40, 48, 187) the Sahidic and the Arabic versions offer an identical text. Even though the similarities are not numerous, they suggest that the Coptic and Arabic translations must have behind them partly similar, but certainly not identical, manuscripts. One reasonable explanation is that their tangential coincidence connects to the geographical circulation of the manuscripts, since the Arabic translation could also originate in Egypt.

If the Arabic translation is a source-oriented one, rendering slavishly the Syriac, the Sahidic one is more reader-oriented. Although the Coptic translator might have been aware that Jacob's *memrā* is metrical, there is no trace of an attempt to follow the literary mold of the original or to imitate its qualities. With several occasions, the original is adjusted in such a way as to become comprehensible to Egyptian readers. For example, the Sahidic adds editorial glosses on verses 241-242 (Bedjan, 820, 5-6), where Jacob of Serugh mentions that Jesus Christ was born in the month of Kanun (ܟܢܘܢ) and ascended to heaven in the month of Haziran (ܠܫܝܪܐܢ). The translator into Coptic found necessary to explicate the text by mentioning also the Egyptian equivalents of the Syriac names of months,

He descended in the month Chainoun, *this being Choiach*, like the Sun that descends in its degree,  
He ascended in Hasiran, *this being Paone*, and he destroyed the darkness by his light.

These insertions are meant to make the text explicit to an Egyptian audience, seemingly unfamiliar with the Syriac calendar. The Arabic version lacks the two additions, providing instead an accurate translation of the original,

نزل في كانون كمثل نزول الشمس في الدرجة

He descended in Kanun, like the sun descends in degrees,

وصعد في حزيران، وخنق بنوره الظلام

He ascended in Haziran and he choked the darkness by his light.

Similarly, verse 67 (Bedjan, 811, 17), "He became for the earth a great Nisan (ܢܝܣܢܐ), full of beauties," is missing in Sahidic. This omission seems to suggest either that the metaphor of Christ portrayed as the abundant and life-giving month of Nisan has been found too cryptic for the Egyptians or that the translator did not understand it.



Other differences between the Syriac and the Sahidic are imputable to scribal errors. For example, a corruption that may derive from the transmission history of the Sahidic text occurs in verse 38 (Bedjan, 810, 8), in which Jacob of Serugh praises the uneducated apostles, who were superior to the wise in the understanding of theology, “The fisherman conquered and the untaught (ܐܡܝܘܢ) became brilliant in your proclamation.” The Arabic renders faithfully the verse as *غلب الصيادون وتفاضل الاميون بكراتك* (“The fishermen overcame and the untaught became excellent in your proclamation.”). In Sahidic, a word in this verse has been corrupted,

αὔχρο γὰρ νεινιοῦωρε· αὔω αὔεπ χωρε· νεινεγραμματῆκος  
 ζμπεκταωεοειω

The fisherman conquered and *the taught* excelled in your proclamation.

The original meaning can be restored in this case by emending *νεγραμματῆκος* to *νε<α>γραμματῆκος*, “untaught,” making it thus to correspond to the Greek-Syriac ܐܡܝܘܢ and the Arabic *الاميون*.

Verse 182 (Bedjan, 817, 9) is also utterly corrupted in Sahidic, “through his blessing (περσμοῦ) he vivified the whole world which was not revealed (επε νεφογονζ εβολ αν πε).” The Syriac original reads at this point, “so that through his death (ܡܠܝܬܐ) he might vivify the world which was not alive (ܕܢܐܡܝܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܚܝܐ).” The right meaning of this phrase can be recovered by operating a couple of corrections in the Sahidic text, that is, by emending *περσμοῦ* to *περ{c}μοῦ* and *νεφογονζ εβολ* to *νερ{oγ}ονζ {εβολ}*, “through his death (περμοῦ) he vivified the whole world, which was not alive (νεφονζ αν πε).” It is obvious that these errors cannot be imputed to the translator, but they rather occurred during the subsequent manuscript transmission of the Sahidic text.

Although the translation into Sahidic is generally accurate, the translator had made a few wrong translation choices. For example, verse 43 (Bedjan, 810, 13) begins in Sahidic with the words “Hidden is your light (ογοειν),” whereas the Syriac original has “Hidden is your fire (ܠܝܐ).” This is probably an error due to the similarity between the Syriac words ܠܝܐ “fire” and ܠܝܡܐ “light,” the translator omitting to read the letter hē. Remarkably, the Arabic translates the Syriac ܠܝܐ by *نار*, which can mean both “fire” and “light.” However, one can also imagine that this alteration may have already happened within the Syriac manuscript tradition.

A more significant corruption of the original meaning of Jacob of Serugh’s text appears in verse 55 (Bedjan, 811, 5),



Syriac	Arabic	Sahidic
ܡܢ ܝܥܪܦ ܝܨܪ ܡܝܐ ܕܐܝܠ ܡܢܕܝܠ	من يعرف يصر المياه داخل المنديل	ΝΙΜ ΠΕΤΣΟΟΥΝ ΝΖΩΓΡΑΦΕΙ ΜΠΜΟΟΥ ΕΧΝΟΥΡΩΝ·
Who knows how to bind water inside a veil?	Who knows how to bind water inside a veil?	Who knows how to paint water on a veil?

As can be observed in the table above, the Arabic renders the Syriac *ad pedem litterae*, unlike the Sahidic, which employs the Greek-Coptic verb *ζωγραφει/ζωγραφεῖν*, “to paint,” instead of “to bind.” The confusion occurred because, when written without vowels, the Syriac verbs “to paint” and “to bind” are homographs. Thus, the imperfect form of the verb “to bind,” ܡܢ ܝܥܪܦ, could mistakenly be taken as coming from the root ܡܢ ܝܥܪܦ “to paint, to draw.” The verb change obliged the Coptic translator to replace also the preposition “within” (ܐܝܠ) with “on” (ΕΧΝ-). Although grammatically justifiable, the wrong decision in choosing the right sense of the verb changed the whole meaning of the phrase.

### 3. The Earliest Attestations of Jacob of Serugh’s *Mēm̄rē* among the Copts

The Sahidic translation of Jacob of Serugh’s metrical homily on the Ascension raises a series of questions that are not easy to answer at our present stage of documentation. Thus, the text edited here is not only the first attestation of Jacob of Serugh in Coptic, but it may also be the first evidence of a direct translation from Syriac into Coptic, with the exception of some texts discovered in the milieu of the Manicheans of Kellis<sup>32</sup>.

The existence of this *memrā* in Sahidic is even more remarkable given that the sources written in Coptic are completely silent concerning Jacob of Serugh, as they are also about the other major theologians who wrote in Syriac, Jacob of Antioch and Philoxenus of Mabbug. According to Father Khalil Samir<sup>33</sup>, the first attestation of Jacob among the Copts is in the anti-Chalcedonian florilegium *Confession of the Fathers*, which can be dated around 1078 CE. Although this patristic collection is preserved only in Arabic and Gəʿəz<sup>34</sup>, Coptic originals for at least some of its parts

<sup>32</sup> GARDNER, *Kellis*.

<sup>33</sup> SAMIR, *Jacques de Saroug*, p. 242.

<sup>34</sup> The florilegium was translated in the 16th century into Gəʿəz under the title the *Faith of the Fathers* (ገጽጽ ፡ አቡጥ).

cannot be completely ruled out. Jacob features in the *Confession of the Fathers* with four quotations extracted from two homilies: two from the *memrā* on the Nativity and two from that on the Passion<sup>35</sup>. However, Samir has not noticed that Jacob of Serugh features in an earlier Arabic florilegium of Coptic provenance, namely the *Precious Pearl* (*Al-durr al-thamīn*). This florilegium was compiled by Severus Ibn al-Muqqafa', probably around the middle of the 10th century CE. Severus included in the *Precious Pearl* three quotations from Jacob<sup>36</sup>, two pertaining to the *memrā* on the Resurrection and an unidentified one<sup>37</sup>.

Although both the *Confession of the Fathers* and the *Precious Pearl* were written in Arabic, it is a murky matter how could their compilers have such a rich Christian theological culture in this language. It is possible that some of the texts included in these two florilegia were not available to their authors in Arabic, but were rather translated from Coptic. Referring to the compiler of the *Precious Pearl*, Samuel Rubenson signaled that "[t]here is every reason to suspect that Sawīrus and other authors using Arabic translated Coptic texts *ad hoc* and then included them in their Arabic works"<sup>38</sup>. Can we argue that the inclusion of quotations from Jacob of Serugh in these early Copto-Arabic florilegia suggests that the texts existed in Coptic? The issue is quibbling and deserves further elaboration and refinement. Unfortunately, a proper answer necessitates more voluminous documentation than we possess.

The earliest Arabic manuscript of Jacob of Serugh's homilies of Coptic provenance is *Vaticanus arabicus* 73, a 13th century codex from the Monastery of Anba Bishoy in Wadi el-Natrun. Notably, the Melkite Arabic manuscripts of Jacob of Serugh's writings that originate from the Monastery of St. Catherine at Sinai are earlier, dating from the 9th-10th century<sup>39</sup>.

Given the penury of sources and the fact that both Sahidic manuscripts of the *memrā* on the Ascension are acephalous, it is even possible to speculate that the text has been transmitted under the name of another author, with whom the Copts were more familiar<sup>40</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> GRAF, *Das Bekenntnis der Väter*, p. 393-394.

<sup>36</sup> GRAF, *Die kostbare Perle*, p. 73.

<sup>37</sup> The quotations from the *memrā* on the Resurrection correspond to ATANĀSIYŪS, كتاب, p. 274, l. 15-275, l. 1; 275, ll. 7-18, cf. MAIBERGER, *Severus ibn al-Muqaffa'*, p. 65, 111, 129.

<sup>38</sup> RUBENSON, *Translating*, p. 6.

<sup>39</sup> SAMIR, *Jacques de Saroug*, p. 216-239.

<sup>40</sup> In this case, the most compelling possibility among the Syriac Fathers is Ephrem, whose name was well-known to the Copts as attested by numerous manuscripts which preserve works attributed to him, although none of them is genuine.

#### 4. *Copts and Syrians. The Translator of the Sahidic Version of the Memrā on the Ascension*

The language on which the Coptic version is based presents another problem that is difficult to assess. Although the literary analysis of the text has indicated that the Sahidic version encapsulates certain peculiar readings of the Syriac, none of them constitutes enough evidence that the Sahidic derives directly from Syriac. It is well possible that all the translational options could have already been present in an intermediary Greek text. Father Khalil Samir cautiously postulated that the Melkite Arabic translations of Jacob of Serugh preserved in the Sinai manuscripts could have been made from Greek<sup>41</sup>. In her turn, Tamara Pataridze suggested that the Georgian version of the *memrā* on the Nativity seems to be based morphologically upon a Greek text<sup>42</sup>. However, she admitted at the same time that, as no Greek translation from Jacob has survived, this hypothesis is fragile. It is perhaps more likely that the Georgian translations from Jacob were made on Arabic models somewhere in Palestine. Indeed, given that no Greek version of Jacob of Serugh's writings exists, it is difficult to postulate an intermediary in this language between the Syriac original and the Coptic translation. Therefore, we may tentatively suppose that the Sahidic translation was made directly from Syriac, noting however that I have not been able to spot in the target language any definite indication of the source language.

The hypothesis that the translation of Jacob of Serugh's homily on the Ascension was made directly from Syriac must be checked by determining whether the writings of Jacob were available in Egypt and who could translate such a text. Was the translator a Syrian living in Egypt or rather a Copt who learned Syriac? Although the cultural exchanges between the Syrians and Copts in the first Christian millennium are still not properly researched, the encounter of the two anti-Chalcedonian cultures on Egyptian soil is partly well documented<sup>43</sup>. It is certain that the originals of Jacob of Serugh's *mēmre* were available in the libraries of the Syrian monasteries in Upper and Lower Egypt<sup>44</sup>, and, consequently, someone who knew Syriac and Coptic could provide a translation. For example, sometimes between 851 and 859 CE, three monks moved to the Monastery of the Syrians in Wadi el-Natrun from another Syrian monastery situated in

<sup>41</sup> SAMIR, *Jacques de Saroug*, p. 240.

<sup>42</sup> PATARIDZE, *Jacques de Saroug*, p. 387-388.

<sup>43</sup> See especially FIEY, *Coptes et Syriaques*; INNEMÉE – VAN ROMPAY, *La présence des Syriens*, p. 180-194.

<sup>44</sup> FIEY, *Coptes et Syriaques*, p. 341.

Maris in Upper Egypt. They brought with them several manuscripts, including two codices that contain homilies by Jacob of Serugh<sup>45</sup>. The manuscripts, kept today in the British Library, are dated 603 and 823 CE respectively. The colophon of the latter mentions that the codex was copied in Upper Egypt by a Syriac monk named Aaron<sup>46</sup>. From this testimony we can infer that manuscripts containing Jacob of Serugh's *mēmre* were copied in Upper Egypt, where the Sahidic dialect was used, at least in the first half of the 9th century CE. Another Syriac codex of Jacob's works, transcribed in the Wadi el-Natrun, is dated 866 CE<sup>47</sup>.

The Syriac manuscripts containing texts by Jacob of Serugh that circulated in Egypt indicate that, at least theoretically, a bilingual person could translate the homily on the Ascension into Coptic. Codex Deir al-Suryan, Syr. 30C (*olim* MK 23) furnishes evidence that such translators existed. According to the colophon of this manuscript of the lives of the Egyptian Fathers, the texts were translated "from the Egyptian tongue into Syriac" by John, son of Macarius. The codex was inscribed by Moses of Nisibis in the year 903-904<sup>48</sup>. Notably, Deir al-Suryan, Syr. 30C contains also the *Life of Macarius* attributed to Sarapion of Thmuis (clavis coptica 0327; BHO 573; CPG 2501). The presence of this text in the manuscript fully validates Satoshi Toda's hypothesis that the Syriac version of the *Life of Macarius* was translated from Coptic (Bohairic)<sup>49</sup>. Other manuscripts preserve the *Life of Shenoute* (BHO 1074-1078; clavis coptica 0461) and the *Life of Dioscorus of Alexandria* (BHO 258; clavis coptica 0400) in Syriac<sup>50</sup>. These *vitae* may also be translated from Bohairic, although an Arabic intermediary cannot be excluded from the outset.

If in the Wadi el-Natrun the monks translated texts from Coptic into Syriac, it is natural to imagine that Syriac texts could be translated into Coptic as well. The Sahidic text of the *memrā* on the Ascension provides some evidence that the translation was made by a Copt rather than by a Syrian. This is suggested by the fact that the translator used the

<sup>45</sup> EVELYN WHITE, *Monasteries*, p. 441. The manuscripts are kept today in the British Library, see the description in WRIGHT, *Catalogue*, p. 517b-524a (= no. 672), 762b-766b (= no. 781).

<sup>46</sup> WRIGHT, *Catalogue*, p. 765b-766b; INNEMÉE – VAN ROMPAY, *La présence des Syriens*, p. 183.

<sup>47</sup> WRIGHT, *Catalogue*, p. 767b-769a (= no. 783).

<sup>48</sup> Description of the manuscript in BROCK – VAN ROMPAY, *Catalogue*, p. 221-224; the quotation above is at p. 223.

<sup>49</sup> Toda made this assertion before the publication of the colophon of Deir al-Suryan, Syr. 30C; see TODA, *Syriac Translation*; IDEM, *Vie de S. Macaire*.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. GUIDI, *Le traduzioni*, p. 52-56; NAU, *Vie de Schenoudi*; IDEM, *Histoire de Dioscore*.

possessive article even when it is lacking in the Syriac original. This excess of possessive articles is more common in Coptic than in Syriac. Its common usage in Coptic is apparent, for example, in the translations of the biblical books<sup>51</sup>. Here are the examples where the Coptic translator added the possessive article in the surviving portions of the *memrā* on the Ascension, v. 41 πκειωτ (sic)/ⲛⲉⲣ; v. 87 περνα/ⲛⲉⲣ; id. νερμντϣανζητηρ/ⲛⲉⲣ; v. 183 περμϣστηριον/ⲛⲉⲣ; v. 204 περιωτ/ⲛⲉⲣ; v. 240 περβαθμος/ⲛⲉⲣ; v. 243 περβαθμος/ⲛⲉⲣ; v. 279 τερβομ/ⲛⲉⲣ. I would simply note that the translator added a possessive each time the context tolerated. This superfluous use of possessive articles suggests that the translation was made by someone who spoke Coptic natively.

Moreover, the translation seems to be made by a person accustomed with the Sahidic version of the Bible. For example, verse 236 (Bedjan 819, 21) reads in Syriac ܕܡܝܬ ܐܕܡ ܕܡܝܬ ܐܕܡ ܕܡܝܬ ܐܕܡ, “death was bound, Adam was freed, and the viper was bruised.” Mentioning the bruising of the serpent, Jacob of Serugh refers to the messianic prophecy of Genesis 3:15. This was a widespread patristic exegetical tradition, which saw in Genesis 3:15 a reference to Christ, the descendant of Eve who defeated the Devil. The Arabic version accurately translates this as *الافعى وأنرضت*. However, the Coptic translator rendered the clause differently, *αγα πρoρ ροεις ετqαπε*, “and the serpent watched his head”.

In order to understand properly the translational option of the Sahidic, we must compare the different versions of the biblical passage envisaged here. Thus, in the Masoretic text of Genesis 3:15, God curses the serpent saying, *וְשׁוּפָנִי יִשׁוּפֶךָ וְאַתָּה תִּשׁוּפֶנּוּ עָקֶב*<sup>52</sup>, “it (i.e. the seed of Eve) will bruise your head, and you will bruise its heel.” However, the LXX version has at this point, *αὐτός σου τηρήσει κεφαλὴν, καὶ σὺ τηρήσεις αὐτοῦ πτέρναν*<sup>53</sup>, “he will watch your head, and you will watch his heel.” The fulcrum of the patristic exegesis of Genesis 3:15 is the translation of the Hebrew masculine singular pronoun *הוא* by *αὐτός*, which is also masculine singular. However, while in Hebrew this connects well with the masculine noun “seed,” in Greek *σπέρμα* is neuter<sup>54</sup>. This apparent disagreement constitutes the basis for the patristic interpretations of the passage as foretelling Christ’s final victory over the Devil.

<sup>51</sup> See the remarks of GUILLAUMONT, *Les sémitismes*, p. 192.

<sup>52</sup> KITTEL, *Biblia Hebraica*, p. 4.

<sup>53</sup> RAHLFS, *Septuaginta*, vol. 1, p. 5.

<sup>54</sup> RONNING, *The Curse*, p. 14.



the piles of unidentified Coptic manuscript fragments. If until now our efforts to identify Coptic literary fragments have been focused primarily on authors writing in Greek and Coptic, this homily of Jacob of Serugh shows us that we should broaden our research into the Syriac milieu as well.

#### 6. *Note on the Edition of the Sahidic Text*

The edition of the Sahidic version of Jacob of Serugh's *memrā* on the Ascension is made almost exclusively on the basis of photographic reproductions of the manuscript fragments. As most of the fragments' photographs are of poor quality, especially those of Codex B, it has been impossible to transcribe all of them properly. There is one exception to that: upon my request, Stephen Emmel collated the fragment BnF Copte 131<sup>8</sup>, f. 99 in the National Library in Paris in March 2014. I am grateful to him for providing his notes on this fragment.

Although semi-diplomatic editions of Coptic manuscripts are generally preferable, the present edition follows the original verse structure of the *memrā*. The numbers in the margins of the pages represent the verse numbers of Jacob's homily. As the scribes of the two Sahidic manuscripts preserving this text employed a different system of superlineation, the reproduction of the strokes above single letters or group of letters would have created a disharmonious mixture in the edition. Therefore, I have not retained the superlinear strokes of the manuscripts except for the *nomina sacra*.

Otherwise, the common editorial signs of the Leiden convention have been used.

#### *Addendum*

An Ethiopic version of the *memrā* on the Ascension also exists. It is preserved in two manuscripts, Ṭānāsee 177, ff. 29r-43v and Ethio-SPARE ms UM-046, ff. 14v-25v. Description of the Ṭānāsee codex in V. SIX, *Äthiopische Handschriften von Ṭānāsee*, Teil 3 (*Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland*, XX.3), Stuttgart, 1999, p. 234-235. The existence of the Gəʿəz text has been revealed to me by Ted Erho (Ludwig Maximilians University, Munich). Unfortunately, I found out about it too late to include an analysis of this version in the present article.



## JACOB OF SERUGH: DE ASCENSIONE

## Edition

34 verses missing

- 35 <sup>(A)</sup> [ϣⲧⲣⲧ]ϣⲣ ϣⲁⲧⲉ`ϣ'ϣⲓⲛ ⲁϣⲱ ⲉϣⲁⲡⲉⲥⲏⲧ ⲛⲉⲓⲡⲙⲉⲣⲓⲧ ⲁϣⲱ ⲛⲓⲙ  
 ⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁϣⲧⲱϣ.  
 ⲛⲧⲟⲕ ⲡⲉⲧϣⲏⲡ ⲱ ⲡϣⲟⲉⲓⲥ ⲁϣⲱ ⲁⲕⲱⲗⲡ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲡⲉⲧⲙⲉϣ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ  
 ⲉⲧⲣϣⲱⲁϣⲉ ⲉⲧⲃⲏⲛⲧⲕ.  
 ⲛⲛⲟⲑ ⲛⲟⲗⲓⲕⲟⲛ· ⲙⲛⲛⲉⲓⲣⲁⲙⲙⲁⲧⲉϣ· ⲙⲛⲛⲉⲑⲓⲗⲟⲥⲟⲑⲟⲥ· ⲁϣⲕⲱⲧⲉ  
 ⲉⲧⲃⲓⲛⲓⲧⲁⲡⲣⲟ ⲉⲧⲃⲓⲛⲓⲧⲁⲡⲣⲟ ⲛⲥⲱⲕ· ⲁϣⲱ ⲙⲡⲟϥⲱⲃⲙⲟⲙ·  
 ⲁϣϣⲣⲟ ⲓⲣⲁⲛⲉⲓⲛⲓⲟϣⲱϣ· ⲁϣⲱ ⲁϣⲉⲡⲱⲱⲣⲉ· ⲛⲉⲓⲛⲉ<ⲁ>ⲓⲣⲁⲙⲙⲁⲧⲕⲟⲥ  
 ϣⲙⲡⲉⲕⲧⲁϣⲉⲟⲉⲓϣ·  
 ⲛⲧⲟⲕ ⲡⲉ ⲡϣⲏⲣⲉ ⲙⲡⲛⲟϥ`ⲧⲉ· ⲛⲧⲟⲕ ⲡⲉ ⲡϣⲏⲣⲉ ⲙⲡⲣⲱⲙⲉ· ⲛⲧⲟⲕ  
 ⲡⲉ ⲡϣⲏⲣⲉ ⲙⲙⲁⲣⲓⲁ·
- 40 ⲛⲉⲧϣⲙⲡϣⲓⲥⲉ ⲙⲛⲛⲉⲧⲁⲡⲉⲥⲏⲧ ⲙⲡⲟϥⲱⲃⲙⲟⲉⲓ ⲙⲙⲟⲕ·  
 ⲁⲕⲉⲓ ⲓⲣⲁ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲥⲁϣⲣⲁⲓ· ⲁϣⲱ ⲁⲕⲟϥⲟⲛϣⲕ ⲛⲥⲁⲡⲉⲥⲏⲧ· ⲁⲕⲉⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ  
 ϣⲓⲧⲙⲡⲕⲓⲱⲧ  
 ⲁϣⲱ ⲁⲕⲓⲛⲉ ⲛⲁⲕ ⲛⲟϥⲙⲁⲁϥ· ⲁϣⲱ ⲁⲕϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲛⲁⲥ<sup>1</sup> ⲛⲟϥϣⲡⲟ· ⲛⲓⲙ  
 ⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁϣⲧⲁϣⲟⲕ  
 ⲡⲉⲕⲟϥⲟⲉⲓⲛ ϣⲏⲡ· ⲧⲉⲕⲃⲓⲛⲛⲁϣ ⲟϥⲟⲛϣ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ· ⲧⲉⲕⲙⲛⲧⲛⲟⲑ ϣⲟⲥⲉ  
 ⲁϣⲱ ⲥⲉϣⲧⲣⲧⲱⲣ ⲛⲉⲓⲛⲓⲧⲁⲡⲣⲟ ⲉⲧⲃⲓⲛⲓⲧⲁⲡⲣⲟ ⲛⲥⲱⲕ·
- 45 ⲟϥⲛⲟⲙ ⲙⲉⲛ ⲛⲧⲧⲁⲡⲣⲟ ⲉϣⲱⲥ ⲉⲣⲟⲕ ϣⲛⲟϥⲙⲛⲧⲣⲙⲙⲁⲟ·  
 ⲁϣⲱ ⲟϥⲛⲟⲙ<sup>2</sup> ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ⲁⲛ ⲉϣⲟⲧ<ϣⲧ> ⲛⲥⲱⲕ ⲱ ⲡϣⲟⲉⲓⲥ ⲙⲡⲧⲏⲣϣ·  
 ⲛⲓⲙ ⲁⲉ ⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁϣⲧⲟⲗⲙⲁ ⲉⲁⲙⲁϣⲧⲉ ⲛϣⲉⲛϣⲃⲃⲉⲥ ⲛⲕⲱϣⲧ·  
 ⲏ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲣⲡⲱⲃϣ ⲁⲛ· ⲛⲧⲏⲏⲡⲉ ⲛⲛⲧⲁⲧⲏⲗⲉ ⲛⲙⲙⲟϥ ⲛϣⲱⲟϥ·  
 ⲁϣⲱ ⲛⲉⲓⲃⲓ ⲗⲟⲑⲟⲥ ⲉⲣⲟⲟϥ·  
 ⲛⲓⲙ ⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲉϣⲟⲙⲟⲙ ⲉⲃⲱⲕ ⲉⲡⲉⲥⲏⲧ ⲉⲡϣⲓⲕ ⲛⲉⲁⲗⲗⲁⲥⲥⲁ
- 50 ⲏ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲡⲉⲧⲉⲟϥⲛⲟⲙ ⲙⲙⲟϣ ⲉⲙⲟϥϣⲧ ⲛⲛⲛⲟϥⲛ ⲧⲏⲣⲟϥ ϣⲛⲧⲉⲓⲃⲓⲱ·  
 ⲏ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁϣⲃⲱⲕ ⲉϣⲣⲁⲓ ⲉⲧⲡⲉ·  
 ⲏ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲡⲉⲧⲉⲟϥⲛⲟⲙ ⲙⲙⲟϣ ⲉⲕⲱ ⲛⲛⲉⲓⲣⲙⲁ ⲙⲙⲟⲟϣ`ⲉ ϣⲓϣⲛⲛⲉⲕⲗⲟⲟⲗⲉ·  
 ⲁϣⲱ ⲛⲉⲓⲣⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ ϣⲓϣⲱⲟϥ ϣⲁⲡⲙⲁ ⲉⲛⲉⲓⲣⲱⲟⲡ<sup>3</sup> ⲛϣⲏⲧϣ  
 ⲛⲉⲓⲡⲓⲟϥⲁ ⲙⲁϣⲁⲁϣ ⲛϣⲣⲥ·

<sup>A</sup> Paris BnF Copte 130<sup>5</sup>, f. 35.

<sup>1</sup> MS reads ⲛⲁⲕ.

<sup>2</sup> MS B: ⲟϥⲛⲟⲙ.

<sup>3</sup> MS B: ⲉⲧⲉⲓⲣⲱⲟⲡ.

## JACOB OF SERUGH: DE ASCENSIONE

## Translation

*34 verses missing*

- 35 <sup>(A)</sup> [Trembles] before him and the beloved (one) is below and who could  
define (you)?  
You are hidden, O Lord, and you showed forth, who is accomplished to  
speak of you?  
The great sages, scribes and philosophers sought to examine you and  
they were not able,  
But the fishermen succeeded and the <un>taught excelled in your pro-  
clamation.  
You are the Son of God, you are the Son of Man, you are the son of  
Mary.
- 40 Those on high and those below could not know you.  
For you came from above and you showed yourself below; you came  
from your Father,  
And you have found for yourself a mother and you became to her an  
offspring; who could comprehend you?  
Your light is hidden, your sight is revealed, your greatness is exalted,  
And the mouths tremble examining you.
- 45 The mouth can indeed praise you abundantly,  
But it cannot examine you, O Lord of All!  
But who will dare to grasp embers of fire  
Or who will not forget the number of the rain drops to reckon them?  
Who can descend to the depth of the sea,
- 50 Or who can explore all the depths with his hand, or who can ascend to  
the sky?  
Or who is capable to set his paths on the clouds,  
And to walk upon them unto the place where lives the One-alone Christ?

<sup>A</sup> Paris BnF Copte 130<sup>5</sup>, f. 35.

- ΝΙΜ ΠΕΤΕΟΥΝΒΟΜ ΜΜΟΦ ΕΑΜΑΖΤΕ ΜΠΚΩΖΤ ΖΝΤΦΒΙΧ· Η ΠΤΗΥ  
 ΖΜΠΕΦΖΑΜΗΡ·  
 ΑΥΩ ΝΦCΩΟΥΖ ΝΝΤΗΥ ΕΤΠΟΡΧΕ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΝΕΦΤΗΗΒΕ ΝΕΦΤΟΒΟΥ·  
 55 ΝΙΜ ΠΕΤCΟΟΥΝ ΝΖΩΓΡΑΦΕΙ ΜΠΜΟΟΥ ΕΧΝΟΥΡΩΩΝ·  
 ΑΥΩ ΠΟΥΟΕΙΝ ΜΠΗ ΤΗΡΦ ΝΕΦCΟΟΥΖΦ ΖΜΠΕΦΖΑΜΗΡ·  
 Η ΝΙΜ ΠΕΤΝΑCΟΥΝ ΠΜΑ ΜΜΟΟΥΕ ΜΠΧ<Ο>Ι<sup>4</sup> ΖΝΤΜΗΤΕ ΝΝΖΟΕΙΜ  
 ΜΠΠΕΛΑΓΟC·  
 Η ΝΙΜ ΠΕΤΝΑΨΕΙΜΜΕ· ΕΠΜΑ ΝΒΩΚ ΜΠΑΙΤΟC ΖΝΤΕΦΒΙΝΜΟΟΥΕ  
 ΖΜΠΑΗΡ  
 ΑΥΩ ΝΙΜ ΠΕΤΝΑΡΑΥΘΑΤΗC ΝΕΦΧΙ ΤΑΘCΕ ΝCΑΠΙΟΥΑ· ΜΑΥΑΑΦ  
 ΠΝΟΥΤΕ·  
 60 ΠΑΙ ΕΤΕ ΜΝΤΑΝ ΜΜΑΥ ΝΤΒΙΝΧΙ ΤΑΘCΕ ΝCΩΦ ΟΥΔΕ ΟΝ  
 ΝΚΕΕΒΡΗΗΒΕ ΕΤΟ ΝΚΩΖΤ·  
 ΑΥΩ ΝΕΦΤΡΕΥΝΑΥ ΕΤΕΦΒΙΝΨΑ ΖΜΠΚΟCΜΟC· ΤΗΡΦ ΝΘΕ  
 ΜΠΕΖ`ΟΟ`Υ·  
 ΑΥΩ ΑΠΚΟCΜΟC ΤΗΡΦ ΡΟΥΟΕΙΝ ΕΒΟΛ ΜΜΟΦ·  
 ΑΥΩ ΤΕΦΒΙΝΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΘΕ ΜΠΗ ΕΡΟΥΟΕΙΝ ΖΜΠΕΖΟΥΖ ΖΙΧΜΠΚΑΖ·  
 ΑΥΩ ΑΦΠΩΤ ΝCΑΚΑΚΕ ΝΙΜ ΜΜΝΤΤΥΡΑΝΝ`Ο`C ΕΒΟΛ ΜΜΟΦ·  
 65 ΑΥΩ ΤΕΦΒΙΝΕΙ ΕΠΕCΗΤ ΑΦΚΩ ΜΠΦΜΑ ΜΜΟΟΥΕ ΖΜΠΚΟCΜΟC·  
 ΠΑΙ ΝΤΑΦΤΑΚΟ  
 ΖΜΠΨΜΨΕ ΝΝΙΔΟΛΟΝ· ΑΥΩ ΑΦCΟΚΦ ΑΦΝΤΦ ΨΑΠΦΙΩ`Τ

*1 verse omitted in the Sahidic version*

ΑΥΩ ΝΘΕ ΝΝΙΓΑΡΠ`Ο`C [...]

*3 verses missing*

- 71 <sup>(B)</sup> [...] [...] . Ε· [...] [...] ΝΤΜ[...] [...] ΝΖΗΤΦ  
 [...] [ΑΥΩ ΑΦ]ΜΑΖC ΝΕ[ΒΙΩ Ε]ΤΖΟΛΦ ΖΜ[ΠΕΦΔ]ΡΟΜΟC·  
 ΑΦΒΩΚ [Ε]ΖΟΥΝ ΖΜΠΜΑΑΧΕ· ΑΦΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΝΤΚΑΛΑΖΗ· ΑΥΩ  
 ΑΦΨΩΠΕ ΝΟΥΧΠΟ·  
 ΑΥΩ ΑΦCΩΒΕ ΜΠΖΟΥ ΚΑΤΑ ΘΕ ΕΤCΗΖ·  
 75 ΑΥΩ ΑΦΝΟΥΧ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΤΕΦΒΙΧ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΖΜΠΕΨΚΦΛ ΝΤΕΖΒΩ . . . .  
 ΝΡΕΦΤΑΚΟ<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> MS B: ΜΠΧΟΙ. There is a dot on MS A above χ, which might be an attempt of the scribe to correct the text.

<sup>B</sup> Paris BnF Copte 131<sup>5</sup>, f. 33.

<sup>5</sup> There is enough space for a few letters before ΠΡΕΦΤΑΚΟ, but the Syriac and Arabic do not have anything before this word.

- Who is able to seize the fire in his hand or the wind in his arm(s)  
 And to gather the scattered winds with his fingers and seal them?
- 55 Who knows how to paint the water on a veil,  
 And the whole light of the sun and to gather it in his arm(s)?  
 Or who will distinguish the path of the boat between the waves of the  
 deep sea,  
 Or who could know the path of the eagle in his journey through the air?  
 And who will become presumptuous to follow the One-alone God,
- 60 The one that none of us can follow, not even the fiery lightning?  
 And he made his rising visible in the whole world as the day,  
 And the whole world was illuminated by him.  
 And his appearance was like that of the sun that illuminates during the  
 day upon the earth,  
 And dissipated from it every shadow of tyranny.
- 65 And (in) his descent, he set his path in the world, the one that had gone  
 astray  
 In the worshipping of idols, and he drew it and brought it to his Father.

*1 verse omitted in the Sahidic version*

And like the fruits [...]

*3 verses missing*

- 71 <sup>(B)</sup> [...] [...] [...] [and he] filled it with sweet [honey] in [his] route.  
 He entered through the ear, came out from the womb and became an  
 offspring.  
 And he played with the serpent, as it is written,
- 75 And he stretched out his hand to the hole of the snake, the corrupted ...,

<sup>B</sup> Paris BnF Copte 131<sup>5</sup>, f. 33.

- ἀγὼ ἀφείνε εβολ νᾶδᾶμ· [...] ἀφ . . τῷτο [...] . . . . ἐπμα  
 [ετμ]μαγ·  
 ἀγὼ ἀφ[χι с]ᾶρξ ἡναι ἀφωψπ εροφ νηγίσε  
 ἀγὼ νεφβει μπῆοβε μπκοσμοс [ῶ]ιτῆνεφγίσε γίχμ[πес]φός·  
 ἀγὼ νεφ[εин]ε μῆτῆμνηε μῆρεῆος νηγμ[ῶαλ] εἰζοσε·  
 80 ἀγὼ [...]...τοῦ ε...[...] νεφᾶαγ νῆψῆρε μπεφ[ω]τ[τ]  
 ἀφεί εβῶλ нее νογсаεин γίχνηсᾶψ нтеπδιαβολос·  
 ἀγὼ ἀφωτ нсанψωне нρωме ним· ἀγὼ ἡνοῦταλῶ  
 ἀφταλῶ· ннетψωне ἀγὼ ἀφ† ногᾶηγγис<sup>6</sup> ннмκαῶ ἀφтвво  
 ннетсвῶ·  
 ἀγὼ ἀφогων ннвал ннвалеее· ἀγὼ ἀφсоγτων ннδix  
 етψογωογ· ἀφтρεнаλ сωтм  
 85 ἀφтегм нреφрнове ἀγὼ нтелωνннс ἀγὼ ἀφсогпоγ ἀγὼ  
 ἀφείне ннетῶογ εβῶ[λ]  
 ἀγὼ ἀγχαωρ[ε] ἀφсооггог εгог[н] ἀφтренмпо ψαχε·  
 ἀγὼ нреφмоо[γт] ἀφтоγнocoγ·  
 ἀγὼ ἀφмооψе γίχω`о`γ ἀγὼ ἀφноγхк еχωογ μπεφῆ[α]  
 ἀγὼ ἀφμαгог е[вол] ἡннеφмнтψ[анг]тнq  
 ἀγὼ ἀφт[ог]н†рннн ἡнтмнте ннампнγе мннетγίχмпкаῶ·  
 ἀγὼ ἀφсмнтоγ ἀφκαταλγ мпемлаῶ нтапгог нoхq ἡнтеγмнте·  
 90 ἀγὼ ἀφтет пгнт нᾶδᾶм ἡмпентаφ<ка>тадекаῶε ммоq  
 гитмпноγте·  
 ἀγὼ гитнтгинс̄φoγ̄ ммоq ἀφогων мпро мппарадисос· пма  
 нψωпе мпоγноq  
 ἀφχει εгогн мппатψελλеет нтаγкωῶ εροφ· ἀγὼ ἀγнохq  
 εβολ [...]

3 verses missing

- 96 [...] н[...] [...] χ . [...] [тес]апе [...] [...] епесн[т]  
 [гитм]пекм[ог]аφει] епма ет[ψнк] ннетмоог[т] пентаφωм[с]  
 нᾶδᾶм·  
 ἀγὼ ῶс ρωме нсоф[ос] нреφωмс· ἀφείне εἰραι  
 мпмаркаритнс· еттайнγ·  
 ἀγὼ ἀφбomбм ннетγипеснт· еφψине нсанеттомс· ἀγὼ  
 еφкωте нсанентаγтако·  
 100 ἀφнкотк ῶатннетмоогт ἀγὼ ἀφкω [...]

<sup>6</sup> ανγγис/ἄνεσις.

And he brought out Adam, [...] he ... returned [...] there.  
 And he incarnated, by this delivering himself to sufferings,  
 And he took away the sin of the world through his sufferings on [the]  
 cross.

And he [brought] freedom [for] the troubled race of slaves.

80 And [...] [...] them [...] and made them the sons of his Father.

He came out as a physician for the wounds (inflicted) by the Devil,  
 And he drove away the sicknesses of every human being, and by healing  
 He healed those that were sick, he relieved the pains, cleansed the lepers,  
 And opened the eyes of the blind, straightened the withered hands, made  
 the deaf to hear,

85 He called the sinners and the publicans and chose them and threw out the  
 wicked ones.

And he gathered the scattered, he made the mute to speak and he raised  
 the dead.

And he walked beside them, sprinkled upon them his mercy and filled  
 them with his compassions.

And he [stirred up] peace between those of heaven and those upon earth,  
 And he settled them, he stopped the combat that the serpent cast among  
 them.

90 And he reconciled Adam's heart with that which condemned him (in the  
 sight) of God.

And through his crucifixion he opened the gate of Paradise, the festal  
 chamber,

And brought in the bridegroom, who was envied and thrown out [...]

*3 verses missing*

96 [...] [...] [her] head [...] down.

[Through] his [death he went] to the [abyss] of the dead, the one which  
 submerged Adam,

And like a skilled diver he brought up the precious pearl.

And he grasped the depths looking for the buried ones and searching for  
 those that perished,

100 He slept beside the dead and laid [...]

56 verses missing

- 157 <sup>(C)</sup> ἈΓΩ ΖΜΠΤΡΕΦΧΩΚ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΕΙΠΤΑΨΕΘΕΙΨ ΖΝΝΕΦΑ<Ι>ΣΘΗΤΗΡΙΟΝ  
ΝΘΕ ΜΠΡΩΜΕ ΕΤΧΗΚ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΝΖΩΒ ΝΙΜ Ν[Τ]ΙΖΕ ΑΦΧΟ{Ο}Κ[Ο]Υ  
ΕΒΟΛ ΖΝΤΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΜΝΤ[Θ]ΟΜ  
ΜΝΝ[Σ]ΨΣ ΑΦΧΟΟΥΣΟΥ ΕΤΡΕΥΕΙΝΕ ΜΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ ΕΖΟΥΝ  
ΕΠΤΑΨΕΘΕΙΨ ΑΓΩ [...]

2 verses missing

- 162 [ΠΤΟ]ΟΥ ΝΗΧΟΕΙΤ ΟΥΜΥΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΠΕ ΝΤΕΠΤΩΖΣ<sup>7</sup>  
ΧΕΚΑΣ ΕΦΕΨΩΠΕ ΖΜΠΕΙΤΟΥ<sup>8</sup> ΝΕΙΝΟΥΝΕΖ ΝΤΕΠΧΩΚΜ  
ΜΠΕΧΠΟ ΝΚΕΣΟ[Π]  
ΑΓΩ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΙΧΩΦ ΟΝ ΑΠΕΧ<sup>9</sup> ΒΩΚ ΕΠΧΙΣΕ ΨΑΤΕΧΩΡΑ  
ΜΠΕΦΕΙΩΤ

2 verses omitted in the Sahidic version

- 167 ΑΓΩ ΕΤΒΕ ΠΑΙ ΑΜΜΑΘΕΤΗΣ ΒΩΚ ΕΖΟ[ΥΝ] ΝΜΜΑΦ [ΖΙΧΜ]ΠΤ[ΟΟΥ]

9 verses missing

- 175 <sup>(D)</sup> [...] [...]q [...]αq [...] . ΕΥΕ [...]ΤΕΧ]ΜΑΛΟCΙΑ· [...]CΩΚ [...]ΑΦΝΤC  
[ΕΒΟ]Λ ΖΝΝΕCΚΑΝ[Δ]ΑΛΟΝ·  
ΑΓΩ ΑΦ† ΝΖΕΝΤΑΙΟ ΝΤΕΤΖΟCΕ· ΑΓΩ ΕΤΡΧΡΙΑ  
ΤΕΝΤΑΥCΟΤC<sup>9</sup> ΕΒΟΛ ΖΝΤΕΧΜΑΛΟCΙΑ· ΕΤΒΕ ΧΕ ΝΕCΚΗ ΚΑΖΗΥ  
ΠΕ· ΑΓΩ ΑΦΒΩΚ ΕΖΡΑΙ ΑΦΧΟΟΥ  
ΜΠΕΠΝΑ ΕΤΟΥΑΑΒ· ΠΕΤ{Τ}†ΖΒCΩ ΕΧΝΟΥΟΝ ΝΙΜ· [ΕΤ]ΘΜΚΗΥΤ  
ΖΝΟΥ[ΝΟ6] ΝΘΟΜ ΤΕΝΤΑΦ[CΩ]ΤΕ ΜΜΟC ΕΒΟΛ [ΖΜΠ]ΤΑΚΟ·  
180 ΑΦΒΩΚ ΕΖΡΑΙ ΑΓΩ ΑΦ[ΤΝ]ΝΟΟΥ ΝΤΜΝΤ[ΡΜ]ΜΑΟ ΝΤΕΠΦΙΩΤ  
[ΜΠ]ΕΤΘΒΒΙΝΥ·  
ΑΦΕΙ ΑΓΩ ΑΦΜΟΥ ΖΝΤΕ<Ν>ΧΩΡΑ ΑΓΩ ΑΦΒΩΚ ΕΖΡΑΙ  
ΕΤΡΕΦΤΑΝΖΟ· ΕΤΖΝΤΕΧΩΡΑ ΜΠΕΦΙΩΤ·

<sup>C</sup> Paris BnF Copte 131<sup>8</sup>, f. 99.

<sup>7</sup> MS reads ΤΩΖΜ.

<sup>8</sup> The manuscript has ΠΓΤΟΥ but the copyist wrote ΖΜΠΕΙ above ΠΓ.

<sup>D</sup> Cairo IFAO Copte inv. no. 205.

<sup>9</sup> MS reads ΝΤΑΥCΤΟC.



*56 verses missing*

- 157 <sup>(C)</sup> And the proclamation having been perfected in his senses,  
 Like a human being perfect in everything, in this way he perfected them  
 in faith and strength.  
 Afterward he sent them to bring the world into the proclamation and [...]

*2 verses missing*

- 162 [The Mount] of Olives is a mystery of the anointing,  
 Because from this mountain shall be oil of the washing of the regen-  
 eration,  
 And from it also Christ went to the height to the place of his Father.

*2 verses omitted in the Sahidic version*

- 167 And because of this, the disciples assembled with him [upon] the  
 [mountain]

*9 verses missing*

- 175 <sup>(D)</sup> [...] [...] captivity [...] drew [...] he brought her out from stumbling  
 blocks.  
 And he gave gifts to her who was weary and needy,  
 To the one who was returned from captivity, because she was naked; and  
 he ascended and sent  
 The Holy Spirit, the one that dresses everyone [who] is humble,  
 And it saved her [from] destruction by a [great] miracle.  
 180 He ascended and he sent the treasure of his Father to the humble one,  
 He came and died in <our> place and ascended to make (us) live in the  
 place of his Father,

<sup>C</sup> Paris BnF Copte 131<sup>8</sup>, f. 99.

<sup>D</sup> Cairo IFAO Copte inv. no. 205.

- ετβε χε ρμπερ{ς}μογ αqτaνζο μπκοcμoς τηρq· παι ετε  
 νεq{ογ}oνζ {εβ`ο`λ} aν πε·  
 αγω αqσωoγζ εροq нνετεnoγq не мμαθηтнc· αγω  
 naпocтoлoς мμεpαte· нteπεqμγcтнpиoн  
 εтpqтaмooγ εpoq· χε qнaвωк εζpαι naψ нze· ρнoγωнz  
 εβολ·  
 185 αγnaγ oγн ετεqanaσtaςic· αγω aγπicтeγe <ε>poq·  
 aqнтoγ εтpeγnaγ мmaγ ετεqбiн[вωк] εζpαι  
 εтpeγψ[ωπε] ммнтpe· нт[εqα]naσtaςic·  
 aγ[ω] нceмeз пkaз ρ[м]πεqтaψeοeи[ψ]  
 aγcωтм ρннe[γ]мaaχe αγω aγ[naγ] ρннeγβαλ· αγω  
 aγбomбм ρннeγбix·  
 190 αγω aγcoγωнq aγamaзтe мmoq· aγpмнтpe нteqбiнmooψe  
 тнp·  
 aqcooγтн εβολ нteqбix· αγω aqcmoγ εpooγ·  
 χeкac· eqeψωпe eqcmamaaт нбipkaз εтcзoγopт  
 зитнteqбix εтcmamaaт·  
 αγω aqтωβz мπεqиωт aqтaaγ εтooтq  
 εтpqpoεic εpooγ· αγω ρмпpан мπεqиωт  
 195 aqт naγ нтpннн· εтpeγтaaс ρωoγ мпkaз τηp·  
 εтpeγβωк εβολ eπεqзωв ρнтpннн нтаqтaaс naγ·  
 αγω aqт бom naγ {χε т}· αγω aqxooc naγ [χε тψooп  
 нмннтн]

*3 verses missing*

- 201 [...] αγω [пpан мπειωт] [...] poεic[·]  
 [aγω] ппa[paκλнтoς] qei нeн[мнтpм]мao ψa[ммаθηтнc]  
 πιωт мeн [зapeз] εpooγ ρмπε[кpан] χε oγнoб пe  
 п[εκpан·]  
 αγω пpан мπεqиωт ρмпψaχe· eqтma Δe ннeqμaθηтнc  
 205 пψнpε χω мmoс χε тψoтн нмннтн· αγω мπεqxi бoл·  
 aλλa eqнмmaγ пe нoε нтаqxooc мпмтψ εβολ нтcooγзc·  
<sup>(E)</sup> αγω aqei нбipeпнa εтoγaaв // aqeiнe naγ нтмнтpмmao·  
 αγω нтoq oн нqнмmaγ пe·  
 πιωт мпψнpe мпeпнa εтoγaaв· нoε нтаqxooc·  
 πιωт poεic· αγω пψнpe кω εβολ· пeпнa εтoγaaв· твbo·  
 210 тeдpиac εтoγaaв нтапк`o`cmoс тaзo epaтq· εβολ зитooтc  
 ρнoγмнтme·  
 ρмпnaγ мeн εтmmaγ aпк`o`cmoс coγeн тeдpиac·

<sup>E</sup> Paris BnF Copte 130<sup>5</sup>, f. 36.

Because through his death he vivified the whole world, which was not alive.

And he gathered to him his own, the beloved disciples and apostles of his mystery,

To tell them publicly how he shall ascend.

185 Then, they saw his resurrection and believed in him,

He brought them to see there his ascension (too),

In order to [become] witnesses of [his] resurrection,

And to fill the earth [with] his proclamation.

They heard with their ears, [saw] with their eyes and grasped with their hands,

190 And they knew him, touched him, and became witnesses of his entire journey.

He stretched out his hand and blessed them

So that the cursed earth should be blessed by his blessed hand.

And he prayed to his Father, he gave them to him

So that he might guard them; and in the name of his Father,

195 He gave them peace so that they could give it in their turn to the whole earth,

So that they could go with his message in the peace that he gave them.

He fortified them and told them, “[I am with you] [...]”

*3 verses missing*

201 [...] and [the name of the Father] [...] guard,

[And] the [Paraclete] carried the [treasures] to [the disciples].

“Father, [keep] them in [your name] for great is [your name].”

And the name of the Father, by the word (of the Son), accompanies his disciples.

205 The Son said, “I am with you,” and he was not lying,

But he was with them as he said in the front of the assembly.

<sup>(E)</sup> And the Holy Spirit came // and it brought to them the treasure and it was with them too,

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, as he said.

The Father guards and the Son forgives, the Holy Spirit sanctifies,

210 The Holy Trinity through which the world was truly established.

At that moment, indeed, the world has known the Trinity,

<sup>E</sup> Paris BnF Copte 130<sup>5</sup>, f. 36.

- αἰῶνι ἐβόλ νειμμύστηριον εἶη· αἰὼν αἰῶνι ἐβόλ·  
 ῥηκκοσμος τηρε  
 ἀφτσαβοοῦ αἰὼν ἀφτ σβω ναῦ· αἰὼν ἀφχοοῦσοῦ  
 νῶε μπρη· ἐφτννοοῦ μπεφοῦρεῖν ἐχμκκοσμος τηρε·  
 215 ἀνακτιν εἰ ἐβόλ ῥηκκῆλος μπῖνοῦ νοῦοειν·  
 μννσα τεῦψη νταπκοσμος τηρε ρκακε νζητη·  
 αἰὼν αἰῶνι ἐβόλ ῥηκκοσ<μος> τηρε εὔτ σβω αἰὼν  
 αἰτσαβε νζεθνος· αἰὼν αἰτ ἡκμ ναῦ  
 ῥημπαν μπῖωτ μπψηρε μππεπνα ετογααβ·  
 τῖνοῦ νσφραγῖς νατωχῖν ἐπτηρε· ἐτε τεδριας  
 220 ται νταφταας ναῦ· ἐτρεῦτωρς ννζεθνος τηροῦ μπκαρ·  
 ἐβόλ ῥηπτοοῦ νηχοεῖτ· ἀφτ ναῦ ντανομασια· ντεδριας  
 μππνερ μπτωρς· αἰὼν τεδριας μποῦχαι·  
 ἀφτ ναῦ ντρηνη· αἰὼν ἀφσμοῦ ἐροοῦ· αἰὼν ἀφμαροῦ  
 νχαρισμα·  
 αἰὼν ἀφχοοῦσοῦ ἐταψεοεῖψ·  
 225 αἰὼν νεῦῶψτ ἐροφ νταφβωκ ἐρραι ἐβόλ ριτοοτοῦ·  
 αἰὼν αἰψοφ ἐροοῦ νβιναμπηγε· ἐγπαρτ μπφμτ<sup>10</sup> ἐβόλ  
 μννεῦκλom·  
 αἰὼν ἀφβωκ ἐρραι ρνοῦνοῦ νλοῦλαι· αἰὼν ἀφαλε ἐρραι  
 ἐχνητῶm ντεφμντῶρε·  
 αἰὼν νετρῖπеснт μνнетρῖμψῖσε· ἐνεγρψε πε ἡε ἀφααῦ  
 νιρηνη·  
 αἰὼν ἀφσμντοῦ αἰὼν ἀφκτο νнетсорм· αἰὼν ἀφβωκ ἐρραι  
 ἐφφραιεῖτ·  
 230 αἰὼν τεφπῖτε ἐτῶσε αἰὼν αἰρρῶτε ρατεφρῖν· αἰὼν αἰτ  
 ἐοοῦ ναφ ἡε οὔρεφсωте πε·  
 ἀφοῦνοφ νβῖпкаρ ἡε ἀφνοῦχ μπεφῶρο`ο`ῶ· αἰὼν ἀφβωκ  
 ἐρραι  
 αἰὼν ασρψε νβῖтπε ἐφβηκ ἐρραι ἐρoс νβῖпχoεῖс νнетῶсе·  
 ἐγρψηρε νβῖпсаснаῦ· ἐχμпмесῖтнс μαῦααφ·  
 νт[а]φρoтпoῦ ἐνεγερηῦ· νетρῖμψῖсе μннетсапеснт·  
 ἡε {νεῦ}νεῦῶont πε αἰὼν ἀφααῦ νιρηνη·  
 235 αἰὼν тапатн асκωρφ· πнове ἀφρε αἰὼν αμντε ἀφψορψρ  
 αἰ<ω> πμοῦ сoнρ ρῖπαροῦ μμοφ αἰὼν ααам βηλ ἐβόλ  
 αἰὼν πρoφ ρoεῖс ἐтqαпe·  
 αἰὼν ἀποῦοειν ρρpо αἰὼν πκακε ἀφанаχωρεῖ ναφ· ἐβόλ  
 ἐπτηρε·

<sup>10</sup> Sic!

- The hidden mysteries were revealed, and they went out in the whole world.  
 He taught them, instructed them and sent them  
 Like the sun that sends its light upon the whole world.
- 215 The rays came out from the circle of the great light  
 After the night during which the whole world has been dark.  
 And they went out in the whole world to instruct and they taught the  
 nations, and baptized them  
 In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
 The great unceasing seal of All, this being the Trinity
- 220 That he gave them in order to anoint all the nations of the earth.  
 From the Mount of Olives he gave them the name of the Trinity,  
 And the oil for anointing, and the Trinity for salvation.  
 He gave them the peace, blessed them, filled them with grace  
 And sent them to proclaim.
- 225 And they looked at him as he went up from them,  
 And those of heaven received him to them while bowing down their  
 crowns before him.  
 And he ascended with a great shout and was mounted upon the power of  
 his strength.  
 And those below and those in the height were rejoicing because he  
 reconciled them,  
 And settled them, returned those who have been lost, and ascended trium-  
 phant.
- 230 And his bow being exalted, they were afraid before him and glorified  
 him because he is savior.  
 The earth rejoiced because he threw his seed and ascended,  
 And the heaven rejoiced as the Lord of the heights ascended to it,  
 Both places were marveling over the Only Mediator.  
 He reunited them with each other, those in the height and those below,  
 because they were angered and he reconciled them.
- 235 And the deception was abolished, the sin fell and Amente was destroyed,  
 And the death was fettered behind him, Adam was freed and the serpent  
 watched its head.  
 And the light reigned and the darkness withdrew from the universe,

- απεζοογ βμβομ αγω αqχρο ετεγυη αqπωτ нсωс εβολ  
 ρηημντρωμε  
 απρη βωκ εζραι· αγω αqω ριχμπεqβαθμοс нωορη  
 εтхосе·  
 240 αγω ηιζηβε<sup>11</sup> εтхολк εβολ· αqααγ ηκογι αγω αqτακοογ  
 αqει μεη επеснт ρμπεβοτ χαιηογη εте χοιαρх πε ηθε  
 етерепρη ηηγ επеснт ηηηт ρμπεqβαθμοс  
 αqβωк εζραι ρη' αсираη εте παωηε πε αγω ρηημπεqογ' ο' ειη·  
 αqωχη ηοηπαке  
 αγω ρμπιεβοτ ηактiη ψαρεпρη βωк εζραι επεqβαθμοс  
 εтхосе·  
 αqβωк εζραι ηηηт ηοηпψηρε ηπογοειη· εтхосе  
 245 ρμπιεβοτ παη ψαqαζεратη ηοηρη ριχηηаπε ηтесфера  
 ηпестереωма·  
 αγω ψαqωψт [...]

32 verses missing

- 278 <sup>(F)</sup> . ω . [...]χiсе ...[ε]ρραι ηтнс[...]πε εтко[...]χ  
 επеснт[. . ρη]тηηεqη[се] ηηηεq[...]οψ  
 [αс]ηαγ ероq [ε]qтaηηγ [εχη]теqβομ η[...]i'те· εq[μο]οψе  
 εζραι' [...]  
 280 πεηηаq[...] [...]οq η[...] [...]ηт [...] [...]ογ [...] [...]οс  
 [...]тρεq[...] η[...] [...] ηοс [...] εζραι [ρμπα]ηη  
 [α]сер[пωβ]ψ ηη[...] тηρο[γ ηπογο]ειψ [ηтестаγ]ρωсiс  
 [αс]ηαγ еηεκλ'ο[λε] ηηηек[ηο]φος εγпωт ραχωq  
 αγω асерпωβψ ηηψαхе ηηет[επερεа]ze ηηοq  
 ριχμпк[οηгоθa]  
 285 асηαγ [ερο]q χε αqχωψρε εβ'ολ ηηηογ ρμπεq[...] αγω  
 αqκωтε εтеqχωpa εqχраеит  
 асei εβολ ρηп[α]ρογ ηηοq ηοηтψеεpe ηπογοειη εтресвωк  
 ηηηаq  
 αγω асωψ εβολ есχω χε χит η[сωк] [...]q  
 [αиω]πε ηак ηα'iei εζραι' [ηη]ηак ψαпек[ειωт]  
 ηток ρηογ'αгaηη <α>кψиηε ηсωi' αγω ρηηεηηпкаρ ακωοпт  
 αγψ ρηηη . . . λω<г>χη ακсω[те] ηηοi'  
 290 ειсρηηηε . . ο ηтк αγω т'ηаеи ηηηак етеχωpa ηпекеиωт

<sup>F</sup> Michigan University 158.37 + Cairo Coptic Museum, *sine numero*.

<sup>11</sup> Variant of ραιβес.

- The day was strong and conquered so that the night fled from the humanity.  
 The sun ascended and remained upon its highest degree,  
 240 And he shortened the extended shadows and destroyed them.  
 He descended in the month Kānūn, this being Choiach, like the sun that  
 descends in its degree,  
 He ascended in Ḥazīrān, this being Paone, and he destroyed the darkness  
 by his light.  
 And (as) in the month of rays the sun ascends to its high degree,  
 The Son of the high light ascended in it.  
 245 In this month the sun stands on the top of the vault of the firmament  
 And it looks [...]

*32 verses missing*

- 278 <sup>(F)</sup> [...] high [...] [...] down [...] through his sufferings and his [...]   
 She saw him mounted upon his power [...] ascending [...]  
 280 The one who [...] [...] [...]   
 [...] [...] [...] great [...] up [in the] air.  
 She [forgot] all the [...] [in the moment of the] crucifixion.  
 She saw the clouds and the [mist] running before him,  
 And she forgot the words of those who [insulted] him on [Golgotha].  
 285 She saw that he hindered death in its [...] and returned victorious to his  
 place.  
 The daughter of light followed him in order to go (up) with him,  
 And she cried out saying, "Draw me after you [...]  
 [I became] yours, let me ascend [with you] to your [Father].  
 You sought me with love, with sufferings you accepted me, and with the  
 [...] sword you saved me,  
 290 Behold, you [...] and I will come with you to the place of your Father.

<sup>F</sup> Michigan University 158.37 + Cairo Coptic Museum, *sine numero*.



αιβωκ εζοϋν νμμακ επεκρητητιον· αγω αιναυ επεκσωψ  
 αγω ριτνννηταγ̄ϣ̄οϥ̄ [μ]μοκ· αῑ. πε εοϥ . . . [...] χι ψ̄ [ιπε  
 ετβη]ητκ  
 [α]!ρ̄[ο]τε αγω ᾱ [ι]εσθαινει [ε]μοϥ· μπ[ναγ] εκαλη[γ  
 εχμπε]ϣ̄οϥ̄ εϥσωφε μ[μοκ]  
 αῑπωτ ᾱ [ι]ο [π]τ μπνα[γ] εϥ̄ταας ν[ακ] ριτνμπ[...] ρα . . . [...]  
 295 αῑχι ψ̄ιπε ετβηη[τκ] μπν[αγ ν]ταγ[ϣ̄οϥ̄] μμο[κ ρ̄ντ]  
 μητ[ε ννηστης]

*79 verses missing*

375 <sup>(G)</sup> [π]εκλοολ[ε αϣβ]ωκ νμμα[ϣ α]ν επμα νταϣβω[κ μμ]οϣ·  
 αλ[λα] [...]ολ ρ̄[...] [...]

*38 verses missing*

415 <sup>(H)</sup> [...] [...] οϥ̄αᾱζοϥ̄ αᾱζις·  
 ταγμα· ταγμα χοροϥ· χοροϥ ρ̄ννεϥσχημα μννεϥσμοτ  
 αϥ̄ωᾱπ τηροϥ  
 ρ̄μπωκ ρ̄ ν̄τ̄ε ρ̄μπεϥμα μπναγ εϣ̄ρηλ επ̄χιβε ν̄βι[...]

*17 verses missing*

433 [...] [...] [...] π̄ειωτ·  
 επμα ετε μν̄βομ ντεκεογα βωκ εζοϥν εροϣ  
 435 αγω εϣ̄σοοϥν ννᾱῑ ν̄β̄ῑπ̄ρρο μ̄ε̄ αᾱγ̄εῑα· ν̄β̄ῑπ̄κεῑθᾱρῑς̄τη̄ς̄  
 ννοϥ[τε] [...]

*51 verses missing*

<sup>G</sup> Paris BnF Copte 133<sup>2</sup>, frag. 288r.

<sup>H</sup> Paris BnF Copte 132<sup>1</sup>, f. 61.

I entered with you into the tribunal and I saw your dishonor,  
And by those that have crucified you I [...] was put [to shame because]  
of you.

I was afraid and [I] perceived death in the [hour] when you were lifted  
[upon the] cross, while they were mocking [you],

I fled, I hid myself in the hour when they slapped you by the [...]

295 I was put to shame because of [you] in the [hour when] they [crucified]  
you between the thieves [...]"

*79 verses missing*

375 <sup>(G)</sup> [The] cloud [did not] go with him to the place where he went,  
But [...] [...] [...]

*38 verses missing*

415 <sup>(H)</sup> [...] [...] [...] rang by rang,  
Order by order, choir by choir, in their form and their manner they  
remained all  
At their place in the valley of heaven in the hour when he was flying to  
the height [...]

*17 verses missing*

433 [...] [...] Father,  
To the place where it is not possible for another one to enter.  
435 And knowing these, the true king David, the divine harpist [...]

*51 verses missing*

<sup>G</sup> Paris BnF Copte 133<sup>2</sup>, frag. 288r.

<sup>H</sup> Paris BnF Copte 132<sup>1</sup>, f. 61.

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*Abstract* — Jacob of Serugh's *memrā* on the Ascension of Christ has long been known to survive in Syriac and Arabic. The present article introduces a Coptic Sahidic version of this metrical homily. The Sahidic text is preserved in two newly identified fragmentary parchment codices from the Monastery of Apa Shenoute (White Monastery), situated near Atriye in Upper Egypt. Comparison between the Sahidic, Syriac, and Arabic versions shows that although the Sahidic translation is not source-oriented, it is generally faithful to the Syriac original. In a few places, the translator altered the text in order to become comprehensible to a Coptic audience. The question that arises immediately is that of the language on which the Sahidic version of the *memrā* on the Ascension is based. Given that Greek versions of Jacob of Serugh's works are not attested, the article brings to the fore the possibility of a direct translation from Syriac. Despite the paucity of our sources, circulation of Jacob's *mēmrē* in Egypt is documented, bolstering the hypothesis of a direct translation of the homily from Syriac into Coptic.