

## 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 *mēmrē* is transmitted in other languages, notably in Arabic and Gə'əz<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, Տիրամայր, p. 58-63), *On the Annunciation II* (TASNAPETEAN, Տիրամայր, 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, Յիսուսի, 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 Atrię.

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 Atri<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, *Manuscrits 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, *Panégyrique 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 *ΑΗΓΙΟΝ/αει* 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 *GeV'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 المروجي, 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 ( كانون ) and ascended to heaven in the month of Haziran ( حازiran ). The translator into Coptic found necessary to explicitate 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,

## و صعد في حزيران ، و خنق بنوره الظلام

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

Similarly, verse 67 (Bedjan, 811, 17), “He became for the earth a great Nisan (نیسان), 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 (نَجَّارُونَ) became brilliant in your proclamation.” The Arabic renders faithfully the verse as غالب الصيادون وتفاضل (الآميون بكرازتك) (“The fishermen overcame and the untaught became excellent in your proclamation.”). In Sahidic, a word in this verse has been corrupted,

αγχρο γαρ ονινιογωσε· αγω αγεεπ χωωρε· ονινεγραμματκος  
χμπεκταωσεοειω

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

Verse 182 (Bedjan, 817, 9) is also utterly corrupted in Sahidic, “through his blessing (πεψμογ) he vivified the whole world which was not revealed (ετε νεψογονε εβολ αν πε).” The Syriac original reads at this point, “so that through his death (ϣאω) he might vivify the world which was not alive (ϣאω νεψ αλ.).” The right meaning of this phrase can be recovered by operating a couple of corrections in the Sahidic text, that is, by emending πεψμογ to πεψ{c}μογ and νεψογονε εβολ to νεψ{ογ}ονε {εβολ}, “through his death (πεψμογ) he vivified the whole world, which was not alive (νεψονε 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 (οὐοεῖν),” whereas the Syriac original has “Hidden is your fire (ܪ̄יא).” This is probably an error due to the similarity between the Syriac words ܪ̄יא “fire” and ܪ̄יםא “light,” the translator omitting to read the letter hē. Remarkably, the Arabic translates the Syriac ܪ̄יא by جَلَلٌ, 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
سَهَدْ مَهَدْ زَهَدْ مَهَنْ سَهَادْ مَهَادْ	من يَعْرِفُ يَصْرِيْلَيْهِ دَاخِلَ الْمَنَدِيلِ	ΝΙΜ ΠΕΤΣΟΟΥΝ ΝΖΩΓΡΑΦΕΙ ΜΠΜΟΟΥ ΕΧΝΟΥΓΡΦΩΝ.

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 ζωγραφεῖ/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,” ՚هَدْ, could mistakenly be taken as coming from the root ՚هَدْ “to paint, to draw.” The verb change obliged the Coptic translator to replace also the preposition “within” (אַנְ) 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 Mēmrē 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 Gə'əz<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 Gə'əz under the title the *Faith of the Fathers* (ጥርጉምናት : አበበ).

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-Muqaffa‘, 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, كاتب, p. 274, 1. 15-275, 1. 1; 275, 11. 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 *mēmrē* 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 *mēmrē* 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)/**¶**; v. 87 πεφνα/**¶**; id. Νεφμντψανζτηφ/**¶**; v. 183 πεφμυστηριον/**¶**; v. 204 πεφιωτ/**¶**; v. 240 πεφβαθμοс/**¶** ḫ; v. 243 πεφβαθμοс/**¶** ḫ; v. 279 τεφбом/**¶** ḫ. 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 **مَوْتٌ مَّرْبُوطٌ مَّرْبُوطٌ مَّرْبُوطٌ**, “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 **الانعى وأنرضت**. However, the Coptic translator rendered the clause differently, **αγω προφ ροειс ετφαπε**, “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, **שָׁבַע אֶלְעָזָר שֶׁתְּשַׁבַּע עַל-עֲדָם יְשַׁבֵּעַ עַל-עֲדָם**, “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 κεφαλήν, καὶ σὺ τηρήσεις αὐτοῦ πτέρναν**<sup>52</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 **אַתָּה** 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.

More important for the present question, the LXX (on which the Sahidic version is based) renders the Hebrew verb נִשְׁׁבַּשׁ “to bruise, to trample, to crush” by τηρέω “to guard, to watch.” This refers to the seed of Eve (or to the mysterious masculine personage) watching the serpent’s head in order to bruise it, and to the serpent lying in wait in order to bite man’s heel. On the other hand, Jacob of Serugh knew Genesis 3:15 only according to the Peshitta, which follows closely the Hebrew text, שָׁבַשׁ אֶת נְשִׁבַּע<sup>55</sup>. Precisely to this version he referred when he said that the “viper was bruised (نَسْفَعَ).” Although the Sahidic version of the Genesis rightly translates τηρέω by շարεց, it differs both from the Masoretic text and the LXX because it says, ῆτορ εφεշարεց επεφτεῖ· ῆτοκ շամակ εկεշարεց ετεկապε<sup>56</sup>, “he shall guard/watch his heel, and you, in your turn, will guard/watch your head.” Thus, in the Sahidic Genesis 3:15 the serpent does not watch to bite man’s heel, but rather watches its own head not to be crushed by man. Only now it becomes apparent why the Coptic translation of verse 236 reads, “the serpent guarded/watched (ροειc) his head”<sup>57</sup>. This reading does not find support either in the Syriac original of Jacob’s homily or in the Greek LXX, but only in the Sahidic version of Genesis 3:15. The peculiar rendering of verse 236 strengthens the hypothesis that the translator must have been a Copt familiar with the Sahidic Bible. Consequently, we may conclude that the translation of the *memrā* on the Ascension was made by a Coptic monk who might have learned Syriac either in the Syriac monastic communities of Egypt or in Syria.

## 5. *The Dating of the Sahidic Translation*

The Sahidic version of Jacob of Serugh's homily on the Ascension is impossible to date within narrow limits on the basis of textual evidence. As for the manuscripts, the earliest probably date from the 10th-11th century CE, which can provide only a very relative *terminus ante quem*. However, the translation itself must be considerably older since it is unlikely that the Copts still translated literary texts into Sahidic at such a late date.

The *memrā* on the Ascension may be the first genuine writing of a Syriac Father discovered in Coptic. However, nothing precludes us from hoping that other Syriac patristic writings can surface in the future from

<sup>55</sup> *Pschitta*, p. 4 (with Syriac numerals).

<sup>56</sup> CIASCA, *Sacrorum Bibliorum*, p. 1; same text published in AMÉLINEAU, *Ancien Testament*, p. 199.

<sup>57</sup> The Coptic verbs *ʒapeq* and *poetic* are synonyms in this context.

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, Tānāsee 177, ff. 29r-43v and Ethio-SPARE ms UM-046, ff. 14v-25v. Description of the Tānāsee codex in V. SIX, *Äthiopische Handschriften von Tānāsee, Teil 3 (Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland, XX.3)*, Stuttgart, 1999, p. 234-235. The existence of the Gə'əz 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> [ψτρτ]ωρ շատε`զ`շի այշ եցառեշտ նեյուրիտ այշ նիմ  
պետաշտաց.  
ՆՏՕԿ ՊԵՏՂԻՊ Ո ՊՃՈԵԻ Այշ ԱԿԵՎԱԼՊ ԵՅՈԼ ՆԻՄ ՊԵՏՄԵԶ ԵՅՈԼ  
ԵՏՐԳՎԱՋԵ ԵՏՎԻՆԻԿ.  
ՆՆՕԾ ՆԼՈՂԻԿՈՆ ՄՆՆԵՐԱՄՄԱՏԵԿ ՄՆՆԵՓԻԼՈՍՈՓՈԾ ԱյԿՈՒԵ  
ԵՏԵԻՆԶՈՒՅԵ ՆԾՈՒԿ Այշ ՄՊՈՂԵՋԵՄԵԾՈՄ.  
ԱյշՐՈ ԳԱՐ ՆԵԻՆԻՕՂՎՃԵ Այշ ԱյշԵՊՃՎՈՎՐԵ ՆԵԻՆԵ<Ա>ՐԱՄՄԱԴԿՈԾ  
ՉՄՊԵԿՏԱՋԵՕԵԻՎ.  
ՆՏՕԿ ՊԵ ՊՎԻՐԵ ՄՊՆՈՒ` ՆՏՕԿ ՊԵ ՊՎԻՐԵ ՄՊՐՈՎՄԵ ՆՏՕԿ  
ՊԵ ՊՎԻՐԵ ՄՄԱՐԻԱ.  
40 ՆԵՏՂՄՊՃԸ ՄՆՆԵՏԿԱՊԵԾԻ ՄՊՈՂԵՋՆՈԵ ՄՄՈԿ.  
ԱԿԵԻ ՐԱԲ ԵՅՈԼ ԾԱՀՐԱ Այշ ԱԿՈՂՈՆՉԿ ՆԿԱՊԵԾԻ ԱԿԵԻ ԵՅՈԼ  
ՉՄՊԿԻՈՏ  
Այշ ԱԿԵԻՆԵ ՆԱԿ ՆՈՂՄԱԱԿ Այշ ԱԿՖՈՎՊԵ ՆԱԾ<sup>1</sup> ՆՈՂՃՊՕ ՆԻՄ  
ՊԵՏՆԱՇՏԱՋՈԿ  
ՊԵԿՈՂՈԵԻՆ ՂԻՊ ՏԵԿԸՆՆԱԿ ՕՂՈՆՉ ԵՅՈԼ ՏԵԿՄՆՏՆՕԾ ՃՈԾԵ  
Այշ ԸԵՎՏՐՏՈՐ ՆԵԻՆԻՏԱՊՐՈ ԵՏԵԻՆԶՈՒՅԵ ՆԾՈՒԿ.  
45 ՕՂՆԾՈՄ ՄԵՆ ՆԴՏԱՊՐՈ ԵԶՈՎ ԾՐՈՂ ՂՆՈՂՄՆՏՐՄՄԱԾ  
Այշ ՕՂՆԾՈՄ<sup>2</sup> ՄՄՈԾ ԱՆ ԵԶՈՒ<ՉՏ> ՆԾՈՒԿ Ո ՊՃՈԵԻ ՄՊՒՐԳ  
ՆԻՄ ՃԵ ՊԵՏՆԱՇՏՈԼՄԱ ԸԱՄՁԵ ՆՉԵՆՃՎԵԾ ՆԿՈՒԾ.  
Ի ՆԻՄ ՊԵՏՆԱՐՊՈՎԾ ԱՆ ՆԴԻՆՊԵ ՆՆՏՃԼԵ ՆՄՄՈԿ ՆՉՈՒԿ  
Այշ ՆԵՎԲԻ ԼՈԳՈԾ ԾՐՈՒԿ.  
ՆԻՄ ՊԵՏՆԱԵՋԵՄԵԾՈՄ ԵՎՈԿ ԵՊԵԾԻ ԵՊՎԻԿ ՆԹԱԼԼԱԾԸ  
50 Ի ՆԻՄ ՊԵՏԵՕՂՆԾՈՄ ՄՄՈԾ ԵՄՈՂՎՄ ՆՆՆՈՂՆ ԹԻՐՈԿ ՂՆՏԵՎԵԱՀ  
Ի ՆԻՄ ՊԵՏՆԱՇՎԾՈԿ ԵԶՐԱ ԵՏՊԵ.  
Ի ՆԻՄ ՊԵՏԵՕՂՆԾՈՄ ՄՄՈԾ ԵԿՈ ՆՆԵՎՄԱ ՄՄՈՕՎ` ՇԻՃՆՆԵԿԼՈՈԼԵ  
Այշ ՆԵՎՄՈՒՄԵ ՇԻՃՈԿ ՎԱՊՄԱ ԵՆԵՎՎՈՕՊ<sup>3</sup> ՆՉԻՒԾ  
ՆԵԻՊԻՕԿ ՄԱՂԱԾ ՆԽՐԾ.

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

<sup>1</sup> MS reads ՆԱԿ.

<sup>2</sup> MS B: օՂՆՎԾՈՄ.

<sup>3</sup> MS B: ԵՏԵՎՎՈՕՊ.

## 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 proclamation.  
 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>s</sup>, f. 35.

ΝΙΜ ΠΕΤΕΟΥΝΕΟΜ ΜΜΟΦ ΕΑΜΑΖΤΕ ΜΠΚΩΖΤ ΖΝΤΦΕΙΧ· Η ΠΤΗΥ  
ΣΜΠΕΦΖΑΜΗΡ·

ΑΓΩ ΝΦΣΩΟΥΖ ΝΝΤΗΥ ΕΤΠΟΡΔΕ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΝΕΦΤΗΗΒΕ ΝΕΦΤΟΒΟΥ·

55 ΝΙΜ ΠΕΤΣΟΟΥΝ ΝΖΩΓΡΑΦΕΙ ΜΠΜΟΟΥ ΕΧΝΟΥΓΡΦΩΝ·

ΑΓΩ ΠΟΓΟΕΙΝ ΜΠΡΗ ΤΗΡΨ ΝΕΦΣΟΟΥΖΨ ΣΜΠΕΦΖΑΜΗΡ·

Η ΝΙΜ ΠΕΤΝΑΣΟΥΝ ΠΤΑ ΜΜΟΟΨΕ ΜΠΔ<Ο><sup>4</sup> ΖΝΤΜΗΤΕ ΝΝΖΟΕΙΜ  
ΜΠΠΕΛΑΓΟΣ·

Η ΝΙΜ ΠΕΤΝΑΨΕΙΜΜΕ· ΕΠΤΑ ΝΒΩΚ ΜΠΑΙΤΟΣ ΖΝΤΕΦΕΙΝΜΟΟΨΕ  
ΣΜΠΑΗΡ·

ΑΓΩ ΝΙΜ ΠΕΤΝΑΡΑΨΘΑΤΗΣ ΝΕΦΧΙ ΤΑΦΣΕ ΝΣΑΠΙΟΨΑ· ΜΑΓΑΔ  
ΠΝΟΥΤΕ·

60 ΠΑΙ ΕΤΕ ΜΝΤΑΝ ΜΜΑΓ ΝΤΦΙΝΧΙ ΤΑΦΣΕ ΝΣΑΨ ΟΨΔΕ ΟΝ  
ΝΚΕΕΒΡΗΗΒΕ ΕΤΟ ΝΚΩΖΤ·

ΑΓΩ ΝΕΦΤΡΕΨΝΑΨ ΕΤΕΦΣΙΝΨΑ ΣΜΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ· ΤΗΡΨ ΝΘΕ  
ΜΠΕΖ`ΟΟ`Γ·

ΑΓΩ ΑΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ ΤΗΡΨ ΡΟΓΟΕΙΝ ΕΒΟΛ ΜΜΟΦ·

ΑΓΩ ΤΕΦΣΙΝΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΘΕ ΜΠΡΗ ΕΡΟΓΟΕΙΝ ΣΜΠΕΦΖΟΟΥ ΣΙΖΜΠΚΑΖ·

ΑΓΩ ΑΨΠΑΤ ΝΣΑΚΑΚΕ ΝΙΜ ΜΜΝΤΤΥΡΡΑΝΝ`Ο`Σ ΕΒΟΛ ΜΜΟΦ·

65 ΑΓΩ ΤΕΦΣΙΝΕΙ ΕΠΕΣΗΤ ΑΨΚΩ ΜΠΦΜΑ ΜΜΟΟΨΕ ΣΜΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ·  
ΠΑΙ ΝΤΑΨΤΑΚΟ

ΣΜΠΨΜΨΕ ΝΝΙΔΟΛΟΝ· ΑΓΩ ΑΨΑΚΨ ΑΨΝΤΨ ΦΑΨΨΙΨ`Τ·

*1 verse omitted in the Sahidic version*

ΑΓΩ ΝΘΕ ΝΝΙΓΑΡΨ`Ο`Σ [...]

*3 verses missing*

71 (B) [...] [...] . Ε.. [...] [...] ΝΤΜ [...] [...] ΝΖΗΤΨ

[...] [ΑΓΩ ΑΨ]ΜΑΖΨ ΝΕ[ΒΙΩ Ε]ΤΖΟΛΕ ΣΜ[ΠΕΦΔ]ΡΟΜΟΣ·

ΑΨΒΩΚ [Ε]ΖΟΥΝ ΣΜΠΜΑΛΑΧΕ· ΑΨΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΝΤΚΑΛΑΖΗ· ΑΓΩ  
ΑΨΦΑΨΠΕ ΝΟΨΔΠΟ·

ΑΓΩ ΑΨΑΒΩΕ ΜΠΦΩΨ ΚΑΤΑ ΘΕ ΕΤΨΗΖ·

75 ΑΓΩ ΑΨΝΟΨΖ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΤΕΦΣΙΧ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΣΜΠΕΨΚΩΛ ΝΤΕΨΒΨ . . .  
ΝΡΕΦΤΑΚΟ<sup>5</sup>.

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

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

<sup>5</sup> There is enough space for a few letters before ΝΡΕΦΤΑΚΟ, 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 (B) [...] [...] [...] [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.

ἀγώ ἀρεινε εβολ οὐδὲν· [...] αρέτη [...] . . . επίμα  
[ετμ]μαγ·

ἀγώ αρέτη γνναι ἀρεφάπ εροφ οντισε  
ἀγώ οενει μπονε μποκομος [χ]ιτηνεψισε γιαμ[πες]ρος·  
ἀγώ οεν[ειν]ε μητρηνε μπρενος οντιμ[χαλ] ετροσε·

80 αγώ [...]...τογ ε...[...] οεναλαγ οντωμηρε μπεριφ[τ]  
ἀρει εβολ οε οογαειν γιαννηαγ οτεπαιαβολος·  
ἀγώ αρπωτ οανωνε ορωμε οιμ· αγώ ονογταλο  
αρταλο· ονετωνε αγώ αρτ οογανγησ<sup>6</sup> ονμκαζ αρτβο  
ονετσοβζ·

ἀγώ αρογων ονβαλ ονβαλεεγε· αγώ αρσογτων ονδιχ  
ετωογωογ· αρτρεναλ οωτ

85 αρτεζη ορεφρνοβε αγώ οτελωνης αγώ αρσοπογ αγώ  
αρεινε ονετζοογ εβο[λ]  
ἀγώ αρχωωρ[ε] αρσοογρογ ερογ[ν] αρτρενμπο φαχε·  
αγώ ορεφμοο[γτ] αρτογνοσογ·  
ἀγώ αρμοοωφε γιαχω`ο`γ αγώ αρνογχκ εχωογ μπεφη[α]  
αγώ αρμαζογ ε[βολ] γννεφμητψ[ανζ]τηη  
ἀγώ αρτ[ογ]οντρηνη γντμητε οναμπηγε μννετζιχμπκαζ·  
ἀγώ αρσμντογ αρκαταλγ μπεμλαζ οταρζοφ οοχφ γντεγμητε·

90 αγώ αρτετ πρητ οαδαμ γμπενταφ<κα>ταλεκαζε μμοφ  
γιτμπνογτε·  
ἀγώ γιτντεινζφογ μμοφ αρογων μπρο μππαραδισος· πμα  
οψωπε μπογνοφ  
αρχει ερογη μππατωελεεετ οταγκωγ εροφ· αγώ αγνοχφ  
εβολ [...]

3 verses missing

96 [...] ο[...] [...] α. [...] [τες]απε [...] [...] επεση[τ]  
[χιτμ]πεφμ[ογ αρει] επμα ετ[ψηκ] ονετμοογ[τ] πενταφωμ[с]  
οαδαμ·  
ἀγώ γως ρωμε οοφ[οс] ορεφωμс· αρεινε ερραι  
μπμαρκαριθс· ετταιηγ·  
ἀγώ αρβομб ονετζιπεснт· εφωине οανεттомс· αγώ  
εφκωтε οανεнтаутако·

100 αρκοтк γαтннεтмooут αγώ αρκω [...]

<sup>6</sup> ανγησιс/άνεσις.

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> ἀγῶ ȝmpt̄r̄eƿ̄w̄k̄ ȝvoł̄ n̄ipt̄aƿ̄eoeiƿ̄ ȝn̄eƿ̄d̄ <i>сөнтирион  
n̄e ȝpr̄w̄m̄ eтжнк̄ ȝvoł̄ ȝn̄w̄b̄ n̄im̄ n̄[t]iȝe ȝq̄x̄o{o}k̄[o]ȝ  
ȝvoł̄ ȝnt̄p̄ic̄t̄ic̄ m̄n̄t̄[6]oм̄  
m̄n̄n̄[c]w̄c̄ ȝq̄x̄ooγ̄c̄oγ̄ eтr̄eγ̄eine ȝpk̄osm̄os̄ ȝz̄oγ̄n̄  
ept̄aƿ̄eoeiƿ̄ ȝw̄ ȝw̄ [...]

2 *verses missing*

162 [πτο]ογ̄ n̄n̄x̄oεit̄ oγ̄m̄yct̄h̄r̄iοn̄ p̄e n̄t̄ept̄w̄c̄<sup>7</sup>  
x̄ek̄as̄ equew̄w̄p̄e ȝm̄p̄eit̄ooγ̄<sup>8</sup> n̄inoγ̄n̄e ȝt̄ept̄x̄w̄km̄  
m̄p̄eȝ̄p̄o n̄keco[π]  
ȝw̄ ȝvoł̄ ȝiȝw̄q̄ on̄ ȝp̄eȝ̄c̄ ȝw̄k̄ ept̄x̄iε ȝat̄eхw̄ra  
m̄p̄eȝ̄eιw̄t̄

2 *verses omitted in the Sahidic version*

167 ȝw̄ eтb̄e p̄ai aмmaθeтh̄c ȝw̄k̄ ȝz̄o[γ̄n̄] n̄mm̄z̄q̄ [ȝiȝm̄]p̄t̄[ooγ̄]

9 *verses missing*

175 <sup>(D)</sup> [...] [...]q̄ [...]aq̄ [...] . eγe [...]t̄eх]m̄aлocia [...]c̄w̄k̄ [...]aq̄n̄t̄c̄  
[ȝvoł̄] ȝn̄n̄eck̄an̄[λ]aλoн̄.  
ȝw̄ aq̄t̄ n̄q̄ent̄aio n̄t̄et̄z̄oсe. ȝw̄ eтr̄x̄ria  
t̄ent̄aγ̄c̄ot̄<sup>9</sup> ȝvoł̄ ȝnt̄eхm̄aлocia. eтb̄e x̄e n̄eck̄i k̄aȝh̄y  
p̄e. ȝw̄ aq̄b̄w̄k̄ ȝz̄rai aq̄x̄oу  
m̄p̄eпn̄a eтoγ̄aab̄. p̄et̄{t} ȝb̄c̄w̄ ȝx̄noγ̄oн̄ n̄im̄. [eт] ȝm̄k̄h̄yт̄  
ȝn̄oγ̄[n̄o6] n̄eom̄ t̄ent̄aq̄[c̄w̄]t̄e m̄m̄os̄ ȝvoł̄ [ȝm̄p̄]t̄aко.  
180 aq̄b̄w̄k̄ ȝz̄rai ȝw̄ aq̄[t̄n̄]n̄oоȳ n̄tm̄n̄t̄[p̄m̄]m̄ao n̄t̄ept̄q̄iωt̄  
[m̄p̄]eтeвvиh̄.  
ȝq̄ei ȝw̄ aq̄m̄oγ̄ ȝnt̄e<н>x̄w̄ra ȝw̄ aq̄b̄w̄k̄ ȝz̄rai  
eтr̄eqt̄an̄z̄o. eтȝnt̄eхw̄ra m̄p̄eq̄iωt̄.

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

<sup>7</sup> MS reads τωȝm̄.

<sup>8</sup> The manuscript has πq̄t̄oу but the copyist wrote ȝm̄p̄eи above πq̄.

D Cairo IFAO Copte inv. no. 205.

<sup>9</sup> MS reads n̄taγ̄st̄os̄.

*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 regeneration,  
 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.

ετεε χε շմպεզ{c}մօց ազտանցօ մոկօմօս տիրզ. ու ետե  
նեզ{օյ}ոնց {ևօ՛լ} ան պէ.

այա ազաօց երօ ննետենոց նէ մմաթենտհ. այա  
նապօտօլօս մմերատ. նտեպեզմյշտիրօն  
ետրդտամօց երօ. չե զնաբակ եշրա նաշ նշէ. շնօյշոնց  
և եալ.

185 այնայ օյն ետեզանատասի. այա այպիտեց <ե>րօց.  
ազնտօց ետրեցնայ մմաց ետեզեն[բակ] եշրա  
ետրեց[ապէ] մմնտրէ. նտ[եզա]նատասի.  
այ[ա] նսեմէշ պկաշ շ[մ]պեզտաքեօւ[ա]  
այշատմ շննէ[շ]մաձէ այա այ[նայ] շննեցալ. այա  
այշօմն շննեցիք.

190 այա այշօցանգայամշտե մմօց. այրմնտրէ նտեզենմօօշէ  
տիրէ.  
ազշօցն եալ նտեզեիք. այա ազշմօց երօօց.  
չեկաս. եզեշապէ եզմամատ նելոկաշ ետշօցօրտ  
շիտնտեզեիք ետշմամատ.  
այա ազտաբչ մպեզիտ ազտաց ետօտգ  
ետրդրօէս երօօց. այա շմպրան մպեզիտ

195 ազտ նայ նտրինհ. ետրեցտաս շաօց մպկաշ տիրզ.  
ետրեցնակ եալ եպեզշաբ շնտրինհ նտազտաս նայ.  
այա ազտ սօմ նայ {չե ի}. այա ազշօօս նայ [չե ի քօօտ  
նմմհտն]

3 verses missing

201 [...] այա [պրան մպեւատ] [...] րօւիչ[.]  
[այա] պպա[բրակնտօս] զեւ նեն[մնտրմ]մաօ ֆա[մմաթենտհ]  
պիտ մեն [շարեշ] երօօց շմպէ[կրան] չե օյնօ պէ  
պ[էկրան.]  
այա պրան մպեզիտ շմպաձէ. եզիմա ձե ննեզմաթենտհ  
205 պահրէ չա մմօց չե ի պահրէ նմմհտն. այա մպեզչի եօլ.  
ալլա եզնմմաց պէ նու նտազխօօս մպմտվ եալ նտօօյշչ.  
<sup>(E)</sup> այա ազեւ նելու պնա ետօյաավ // ազեւն նայ նտմնտրմմաօ.  
այա նտօօ օն նզնմմաց պէ.  
պիտ մնպահրէ մնպւ պնա ետօյաավ. նու նտազխօօս.  
պիտ րօւիչ. այա պահրէ կա եալ. պւ պնա ետօյաավ. տետօ.  
210 տեարիաս ետօյաավ նտակ`օ՛սմօս տաշ երատգ. եալ շիտօօտց  
շմպնայ մեն ետմմաց առկ`օ՛սմօս սօյն տեարիաս.

<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.

αγεωλπ εβολ ονιμμυστηριον εθηπ· αγω αγβωκ εβολ·  
 215 ζμπκοσμος τηρρ  
 αφτσαβοογ αγω αφτ σβω ναγ· αγω αφχοογσογ  
 ονθε μπρη· εφτννοογ μπεφογοειη εζμπκοσμος τηρρ·  
 αφτακτιν ει εβολ ζμπκγκλος μπινος νογοειν·  
 μννα τεγωφη οταπκοσμος τηρρ ρκακε νζητρ·  
 αγω αγβωκ εβολ ζμπκοσ<μοσ> τηρρ εγτ σβω αγω  
 αγτσαβε νζεθονος· αγω αγτ χωκμ ναγ  
 ζμπραν μπιωτ μνπψηρε μνπεπνα ετογααβ·  
 τνοσ ονφραγις οατωαν επτηρρ· ετε τεδριας  
 220 ται οταφταας ναγ· ετρεγτωρε ονζεθονος τηρρογ μπκαρ·  
 εβολ ζμπτοογ ονδοειτ· αφτ ναγ οτανομασια· οτεδριας  
 μνπνερ μπτωρε· αγω τεδριας μπογχαι·  
 αφτ ναγ οτρηνη· αγω αφсмоу εροογ· αγω αφмазоу  
 οхарicма·  
 αγω αφχοογσογ ετρωφεοειω·  
 225 αγω οεγεωφτ εροφ οταφωκ εγραι εβολ ζιτοοτογ·  
 αγω αγψοφ εροογ ονιναμπηγε· εγπαχτ μπφμτω<sup>10</sup> εβολ  
 μννεγκλομ·  
 αγω αφβωκ εγραι ζνογνος ολογλαι· αγω αφαλε εγραι  
 εχντбом οтевмнтжωωρε·  
 αγω οετζипеент μннетζмпжисе· εнεγρашe πe χe αφааγ  
 οирнн·  
 αγω αφсмнтоу αγω αфкто οннетсorm· αγω αφβωκ εγραι  
 εфхраеit·  
 230 αγω τεφпite εтхосе αγω αγρзоте զաթеզիн· αγω αγт  
 εооу νаq χe οүгρефсωтe πe·  
 αφоуноq οеиткаq χe αφноуж μпефбро`о`e· αγω αφβωκ  
 εгrai·  
 αγω αсrашe οеitпe εqвhк εгrai εрос οеitпхoеiс οннетхосе·  
 εγрψпhрε οеitпаснаq· εзмpmеcитhс мaзaаq·  
 οт[а]qзотпoу εнeгeрhг· οeтζмпжисе μннетcапeенt·  
 χe {нeг} οeгбoнt πe αγω αφааγ οирнн·  
 235 αγω οαтaтh οскωрр· πnoвe αφqе αγω αмnтe αφωρωр  
 αγ<ω> πmoγ coпq շipаzоy μmoq αγω αдaм вnл εboл  
 αγω πzоq ρoеiс εтqapе·  
 αγω αpoγoеiп ρppo αγω ρkакe αqanaxωrei νaq· εboл  
 εptηrр·

<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 triumphant.

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,

απεροογ εμβομ αγω αφαρο ετεγψη αφπωτ ηωσ εβολ  
 ΣΝΤΜΝΤΡΩΜΕ  
 απρη βωκ εγραι· αγω αφεω ɔιχμπεψβαθμος ηφορπ  
 ετχοσε·

240 αγω ηιχηβε<sup>11</sup> ετχολκ εβολ· αφαγ ηκογι αγω αφτακογ  
 αφει μεν επεσητ ɔιμπεψοτ χαινογη ετε χοιαχ πε ηθε  
 ετερεπρη ηηγ επεσητ ηητη ɔιμπεψβαθμοс  
 αφβωκεγραιην` ɔιασιραν ετεψωνεψεαγω ɔιτμπεψογ` ο` ειν·  
 αφωδη ηειπκακε  
 αγω ɔιμπιεψοτ ηακτιν ψαρεψρη βωκ εγραι εψεψβαθμοс  
 ετχοσε·  
 αφβωκ εγραι ηητη ηειψψηρε μπογοειν· ετχοσε  
 245 ɔιμπιεψοτ παι ψαφαζερατη ηειπρη ɔιχηταψ ητεψφερα  
 μψεстερεωμα·  
 αγω ψαφεωψ [...]

32 verses missing

278 (F) . ω . [...]χισε ...[ε]γραι ητηс[...]πε ετκο[...]χ  
 επεснт[. . ɔι]τηннεψги[сε] μннεψ[...]οψ  
 [αс]ηаγ ερο[ε]ψταληγ [εхн]тεψбом η[...]иτε· εψ[мo]οψε  
 εγρai[...]  
 280 πεντаq[...] [...]οψ η[...] [...]ηт [...] [...]ογ [...] [...]οс  
 [...]трεq[...] η[...] [...] ηo[...] εγρai [ζηпa]ηp  
 [a]cεр[πωв]ψ ηη[...] тηρo[γ μψογ]ειψ [ηтeстaγ]ρωcic  
 [αс]ηаγ εнeкλo[λe] μнпeк[no]фoс εγpωт շaхaв  
 αγω αcεрpωвψ ηηψaжe ηηeт[εпeрeа]ze μмoq  
 շiхmпk[oлgоθa]  
 285 αсnаg [ερo]q χe αφжaвaрe εвoл μpmoγ ɔιmpeq[...] αγω  
 αφkψtε εтeψxωra εqxraeit  
 aсei εвoл շiр[а]zоγ μмoq ηeitψeεre μψoγoεiн εтpeсbωk  
 nmmaq  
 αγω aсωψ εвoл εcжω χe χit η[сωk] [...]q  
 [a]iψa]pε ηaк мaрiεi εγrai[ηm]mаk ψaпeк[eiωt]  
 ηtοk շnօγaгapη <a>κψiнe ηcωiαγω շnշeηmпkаշaкψoрt  
 aγψ շnтh . . . ձo<г>xh aкcω[te] μmoi  
 290 εiczhihtε . . ο ηtк aγω tnaei ηmmak εtexwra μpекeιωt

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

<sup>11</sup> Variant of շaiвeс.

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 Hazīrān, 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*.

αιωνικ εζογν ημμακ επεκρητητιον· αγω αιναγ επεκσωφ  
 αγω ζιτνηνεταγ<sup>ς</sup>φογ<sup>ς</sup>[μ]μοκ· αι· πε εογ . . . [...] χι ψ[ιπε  
 ετβη]ητκ  
 [α]ιργ[ο]τε αγω ρ[ι]εσθανηει [ε]μογ· μπ[ναγ] εκαλη[γ]  
 εξμπε]сφοс εγσωφε μ[μοκ]  
 αιπωτ α[ιργ]πτ μπνα[γ] εγταас н[ακ] ζιτνημп[...] ρα . . [...]  
 295 αιχι ψιπε ετβηη[τκ] μπν[αγ н]ταγ[сφογ] μμο[κ ζητ]  
 μητ[ε ηηληстнс]

79 *verses missing*

375 <sup>(G)</sup> [π]εκλοοολ[ε αφβ]ωκ ημμα[ρ α]ν επμα ηταφβω[κ μμ]οφ·  
 αλ[λα] [...]ολ ζ[...] [...]

38 *verses missing*

415 <sup>(H)</sup> [...] [...] ογδαζοс дазис·  
 ταγμα· ταγμα χοροс· χοροс ζηνεγсхима μηνεγсмот  
 αγφωφтηρоу  
 ζημπωφкη ηтпε ζημпεγма μпнаγ εφгнла εпжисе nei[...]

17 *verses missing*

433 [...] [...] [...] πειωτ·  
 επμα εтe μηδом ηтeκeоуgа вwк εζoγn εpoφ  
 435 αγω εqcooγn ηnaи· neipрro μmеdaγeia· neipkeiθariсtнc  
 nnoγ[te] [...]

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 Atripe 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.