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A Coptic Fragment from the *History of Joseph the Carpenter* in the Collection of Duke University Library

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The *History of Joseph the Carpenter* (BHO 532–533; CANT 60; *clavis coptica* 0037)¹ is readily accessible in many collections of New Testament Apocrypha.² The text is fully preserved in Arabic and Bohairic, which was the regional dialect of Lower Egypt, and fragmentarily in Sahidic (i.e., the dialect of Upper Egypt). The present paper introduces P. Duk. inv. 239, a previously unidentified Sahidic fragment of this writing, which surfaced recently among the manuscripts in the Special Collections Library of Duke University. The new textual witness supplies us with a portion of the *History of Joseph the Carpenter* previously unattested in Sahidic. Moreover, the Duke fragment displays at least one interesting variant reading, unrecorded in the Bohairic and Arabic versions of the text.

¹ The following conventional abbreviations are used for the *claves* cited in this article:

CAVT = Jean-Claude Haelewyck, *Clavis Apocryphorum Veteris Testamenti* (Corpus Christianorum; Turnhout: Brepols, 1998)

CANT = Maurice Geerard, *Clavis Apocryphorum Novi Testamenti* (Corpus Christianorum; Turnhout: Brepols, 1992);

BHO = Paul Peeters, *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis* (Subsidia Hagiographica 10; Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1910).

The *clavis coptica* is available online at <http://cmcl.aai.uni-hamburg.de/>.

² Aurelio de Santos Otero, *Los Evangelios apócrifos* (6th ed.; BAC 148; Madrid: Editorial Católica, 1988) 358–78; Mario Erbetta, *Gli Apocrifi del Nuovo Testamento* (4 vols.; Turin: Marietti, 1981) 1:186–205; *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens* (ed. François Bovon, Pierre Geoltrain, and Jean-Daniel Kaestli; 2 vols.; Bibliothèque de la Pléiade; Paris: Gallimard, 1997–2005) 2:27–59; Bart D. Ehrman and Zlatko Pleše, *The Apocryphal Gospels: Texts and Translations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 157–93 (Coptic text and English translation). See also the resumé of the text in Montague Rhodes James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (8th ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1963) 84–86.

From a literary point of view, the *History of Joseph* belongs to a group of works that Joost Hagen has called the “apostolic diaries.”³ The principal characteristic of all these texts is their claim to be apostolic books or diaries that record some of the original sayings of Jesus. They appear in the form of revelation dialogues⁴ between Christ and the apostles, usually set on the Mount of Olives. Jesus typically refers in his revelatory discourses to different topics (e.g., angelic beings; his birth, passion, and resurrection; saintly figures or places), which all happen to coincide with certain events in the Coptic calendar. The apostles record the revelation and deposit the book, most often, in the library of Jerusalem for the benefit of future generations.

As an “apostolic book,” the *History of Joseph* purports to be a revelation of Jesus Christ to his disciples on the Mount of Olives concerning the death of his earthly father on Epep 26 (July 20)⁵ at the age of 111. The first part of the text draws heavily upon the *Protevangelium of James* and other apocryphal infancy narratives. Joseph is introduced as an old carpenter having children from a previous marriage (2.1–6). On the other hand, Mary is a young virgin who spent the last nine years of her life serving in the temple. When she reaches the age of twelve, the priests decide to find her a husband (3.1–2). They cast lots and Mary is given as a wife to Joseph (4.1–6). Two years later, Mary conceives by the Holy Spirit and, unaware of the miracle, Joseph wants to send her away in secret. The Archangel Gabriel appears to Joseph in a dream and reveals to him that Mary will give birth to the Savior, whose name will be Jesus (5.1–6.3). Joseph takes Mary and they go to Bethlehem in order to register for the census. On the way Jesus Christ is born, fulfilling the prophecy that the Messiah must come from Bethlehem (7.1–3). The episode of the flight to Egypt and the massacre of the innocents are mentioned at 8.1–3. The narrative concerning the childhood of Jesus ends with the return of the holy family to Nazareth (9.1). Chapters 10–29 represent a long section

³ Joost Hagen, “The Diaries of the Apostles: ‘Manuscript Find’ and ‘Manuscript Fiction’ in Coptic Homilies and Other Literary Texts,” in *Coptic Studies on the Threshold of a New Millennium. Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Coptic Studies, Leiden, 27 August–2 September 2000* (ed. Mat Immerzeel and Jacques van der Vliet; OLA 133; Louvain: Peeters, 2004) 349–67; idem, “Ein anderer Context für die Berliner und Straßburger ‘Evangelienfragmente,’ Das ‘Evangelium des Erlösers’ und andere ‘Apostelevangeliën’ in der koptischen Literatur,” in *Jesus in apokryphen Evangelienüberlieferungen. Beiträge zu außerkanonischen Jesusüberlieferungen aus verschiedenen Sprach- und Kulturtraditionen* (ed. Jörg Frey and Jens Schröter; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010) 339–71. These writings (about two dozen) are preserved in Coptic, Arabic, and Ethiopic (in the latter cases they depend on Coptic originals, which are sometimes lost or not yet identified).

⁴ These revelation dialogues are often embedded in homiletic texts attributed to different Fathers of the Coptic Church. See Tito Orlandi, “Gli Apocrifi copti,” *Aug* 23 (1983) 57–71, at 70–71.

⁵ On this day, the Coptic Church celebrates Saint Joseph the Carpenter; see the notice in the Coptic synaxary (Epep 26) in Jacques Forget, *Synaxarium alexandrinum* (2 vols. in 6; CSCO 47–49, 67, 78, 90; Scriptorum arabici, 3–5, 11–13; Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1905–1932) 1:246–47 (Arabic text), 2:241–2 (Latin translation); René Basset, *Le synaxaire arabe Jacobite (rédaction copte)* (PO 17; Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1923) 690–91.

that focuses on the death and burial of Joseph. It is interesting to remark that the details concerning the preparations of the body for burial follow closely the funerary rituals described in the *Book of the Dead*, this being one of the elements that suggest an Egyptian provenance of the document.⁶ The section ends with the burial of Joseph in the tomb of the patriarch Jacob. Finally, in chapters 30–32 we find out that although Jesus Christ did not grant immortality to Joseph, he protected his body from decay and transferred his soul to heaven.

Various influences have been detected in the text: from the *Protevangelium of James* (which had an impact on the chapters concerning the childhood of Christ) and the *Testaments of Abraham, Jacob, and Isaac* (CAVT 88, 98, 99), to ancient Egyptian mythology and Gnosticism. I should like to note here, however briefly, a few points of contact between the *History of Joseph* and the narratives regarding the death (i.e., Dormition) and assumption of the Virgin Mary. Like many texts concerning the Dormition of the Virgin, the *History* recounts only briefly the major moments of Joseph's life,⁷ dedicating a more extensive section to the events surrounding his death. Moreover, another feature that the *History of Joseph* shares with the Dormition stories is an obvious tendency to see Christ as divine and human at the same time. If in the Dormition narratives Mary is portrayed as Theotokos, who gave birth to God and man in a real sense, but had kept her virginity untouched, our text calls Joseph "Christ's father according to the flesh." As unusual as it may sound, this formula aims to defend the idea that, although Jesus is divine, he was also a descendant of David, being thus a human being. The human and divine condition of Christ is expressed by the author(s) of the text through Joseph: "You are Jesus Christ, truly Son of God and son of man at the same time" (*Hist. Joseph* 17.17).

According to the hypothesis of Louis-Théophile Lefort, the *History of Joseph* was originally composed in the Sahidic dialect of Coptic.⁸ This is ascertained by the numerous biblical quotations which follow closely the Sahidic version of the Bible. As for the Bohairic version, this contains linguistic features that indicate it was translated from Sahidic. Finally, the Arabic translation of the *History of Joseph* was made from Bohairic. A comparison between the various manuscripts of the Arabic and Coptic recensions shows that the text suffered some redactional

⁶ On the comparison between *Hist. Jos. Carp.* 26 and the Egyptian mummification rituals, see Siegfried Morenz, *Die Geschichte von Joseph dem Zimmermann* (TU 56; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1951). The Egyptian provenance of the *Hist. Jos. Carp.* has been accepted by the majority of scholars who have studied the text. For his part, Bellarmino Bagatti postulated a Palestinian origin, but his arguments are not convincing. See his "Il culto di S. Giuseppe in Palestina," in *Cahiers de Joséphologie* 19 (1971) 564–75.

⁷ As I already said above, these details are in fact common themes taken from the *Protevangelium of James* and other similar infancy narratives.

⁸ Louis-Théophile Lefort, "À propos de 'L'Histoire de Joseph le Charpentier'," *Mus* 66 (1953) 201–23, at 204–6.

changes during the transmission process. It is likely that some modifications had been made already during the transmission of the Sahidic manuscripts. Indeed, those parts of the text where the Sahidic manuscripts overlap exhibit some manifest divergences, which indicate that the original writing has been revised several times.⁹

The *History of Joseph the Carpenter* became widely known in 1722 through Georg August Wallin's Latin translation after an Arabic manuscript in the Royal Library in Paris.¹⁰ Wallin's Arabic text and Latin translation have been reprinted, with or without emendations, on several occasions.¹¹ Antonio Battista and Bellarmino Bagatti published in 1975 the current standard edition of the Arabic version, based on numerous manuscripts of Egyptian provenance.¹²

As early as 1808, Étienne Quatremère discovered the Bohairic version of the *History of Joseph the Carpenter* in the manuscript Borg. Copt. 66.¹³ The army of Napoleon confiscated this manuscript together with others from the collection of Stefano Borgia, housing it between 1797 and 1815 in the Royal Library in Paris.¹⁴

⁹ For a comparison of the Sahidic versions, see Lefort, "L'Histoire de Joseph," 207–10.

¹⁰ Georg Wallin, *Qissat Yusuf an-naggar, sive historia Iosephi fabri lignarii* (Leipzig: Andrea Zeidler, 1722). Today the manuscript bears the call number Par. ar. 177 (described in Gérard Troupeau, *Manuscripts chrétiens* [Part 1 of *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes*; 2 vols.; Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1972] 1:152–53).

¹¹ Wallin's Latin translation was republished in Johann Albert Fabricius, *Codicis pseudepigraphi Veteris Testamenti* (2 vols.; Hamburg: T. C. Felginer, 1713–1723) 2: 313–36, while Johann Karl Thilo (*Codex apocryphus Novi Testamenti* [2 vols.; Leipzig: F. C. G. Vogel, 1832] 1:1–61) printed both the Arabic text and the Latin translation prepared by Wallin (with Emil Rödiger's revision of the Arabic); Constantin Tischendorf, *Evangelia apocrypha* (Leipzig: Avenarius & Mendelssohn, 1853) 115–33 (only the Latin translation); Jacques-Paul Migne, *Dictionnaire des apocryphes* (2 vols.; Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1856–1858) 1:1027–44 (French translation from Latin); Paul Peeters and Charles Michel, *Évangiles apocryphes* (2 vols.; Textes et documents pour l'étude historique du christianisme 13, 18; Paris: Picard, 1911–1914) 1:192–245 (new French translation of the Arabic and Bohairic versions by Paul Peeters).

¹² Antonio Battista and Bellarmino Bagatti, *Edizione critica del testo arabo della Historia Iosephi fabri lignarii e ricerche sulla sua origine* (Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Collectio Minor 20; Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1975). A list of the Arabic codices that contain the *Hist. Jos. Carp.* was prepared by Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur* (5 vols.; Studi e testi 118, 133, 146, 147, 172; Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica, 1944–1953) 1:236.

¹³ Borg. copt. 66 belongs to the lot of Bohairic manuscripts acquired by Joseph Assemani from the monasteries of Scetis for the cardinal Stefano Borgia. Description of the manuscript in Adolphe Hebbelynck and Arnold van Lantschoot, *Codices coptici Vaticani* (vol. 1 of *Codices coptici Vaticani, Barberiniani, Borgia, Rossiani*; Rome: Bibliotheca Vaticana, 1937) 487–88. As it stands now, Borg. copt. 66 brings together various Bohairic parchment leaves taken from different codices, which belonged to the Monastery of St. Macarius in Scetis. They were bound together at the end of the eighteenth century, after they arrived in the Borgia collection. The *Hist. Jos. Carp.* is the eleventh piece of this miscellany and it is dated A.M. 783 (= 1065 C.E.).

¹⁴ Étienne Quatremère, *Recherches critiques et historiques sur la langue et la littérature de l'Égypte* (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1808) 128.

What they left in the Vatican was only a copy of the Bohairic *History of Joseph*, which was carelessly transcribed after the original by the Coptic Roman Catholic priest Raffaele Tuki at the end of the eighteenth century. This modern copy is to be found in the paper manuscript Borg. Copt. 25. Because of the temporary removal of the original document from Rome, Georg Zoega was able to mention in his catalogue of the Coptic manuscripts in the Borgian collection only Tuki's copy of the Bohairic *History of Joseph*.¹⁵ Moreover, this faulty transcription served as a basis for Eugène Revillout's lithographed 1876 edition.¹⁶ Forbes Robinson was the first to draw attention to two Bohairic fragments in the John Rylands Library in Manchester (Crawford no. 39), which came from a second witness of our text in this dialect.¹⁷

In 1883, the text of Borg. Copt. 66 was finally published by Paul de Lagarde.¹⁸ No other edition of the Bohairic text has been made ever since, but we should remark that Forbes Robinson's English translation from 1896 was based on an autoptic examination of the manuscript in the Vatican, and his notes to the translation contain useful improvements to de Lagarde's edition.¹⁹ Similarly, Bart D. Ehrman and Zlatko Pleše's publication of the *History of Joseph* in a more recent collection of apocryphal writings is said to be dependent on de Lagarde's text, but "with occasional changes based on the collation against the manuscript photographs."²⁰

The Sahidic version, this is attested by several dismembered manuscripts scattered all over the world. Georg Zoega first reported on the existence of eight leaves in the Borgian collection (no. 121).²¹ Some two decades later, Johann Karl Thilo

¹⁵ Georg Zoega, *Catalogus codicum Copticorum manu scriptorium qui in museo Borgiano Velitris adservantur* (Rome, 1810; repr., Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1973) 33 (= no. 25).

¹⁶ Eugène Revillout, *Apocryphes coptes du Nouveau Testament* (Études Égyptologiques 7; Paris: F. Vieweg, 1876) 43–71. Revillout's transcription was translated into German by Ludwig Stern, "Das Lebens Josephs des Zimmermanns aus dem Koptischen übersetzt," *ZWT* 26 (1883) 267–94 (with corrections to Revillout's text).

¹⁷ Forbes Robinson, *Coptic Apocryphal Gospels* (TS 4; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1896) xxviii; see also Walter Ewing Crum, *Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts in the Collection of the John Rylands Library, Manchester* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1909) 219 (= no. 440).

¹⁸ Paul de Lagarde, *Aegyptiaca* (Gottingen: D. A. Hoter, 1883; repr., Osnabrück: Otto Zeller, 1972) 1–37. De Lagarde also gave, on the bottom of the pages, the Arabic version and the Sahidic fragments that he knew. De Lagarde's edition of the Bohairic text served as a basis for virtually all the other translations in modern languages that followed. Beside the works quoted above in n. 2, we must mention Morenz, *Geschichte von Joseph*, 1–26; Gustav Klameth, "Über die Herkunft der apokryphen *Geschichte Josephs des Zimmermanns*," *Angelos* 3 (1928) 6–31 (partial translation of the Sahidic and Bohairic texts published by de Lagarde).

¹⁹ Robinson, *Coptic Apocryphal Gospels*, 130–47, and the notes on 220–29.

²⁰ Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, 159.

²¹ Zoega, *Catalogus*, 225 (= no. 121). A French translation of Zoega 121 was made in 1835 by Édouard Dulaurier, *Fragment des révélations apocryphes de Saint Barthélemy, et de l'histoire des communautés religieuses fondées par Saint Pakhome* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1835) 23–29. This translation was reworked and published again by Eugène Revillout, "Les Affres de la mort chez les Égyptiens," *Revue égyptologique* 2 (1882) 64–71, at 65–66.

had recognized that Zoega no. 116, which is a single leaf paginated 87–88, might also belong to the *History of Joseph*. Although Thilo's identification proved to be correct, the German scholar was wrong in suspecting that this fragment would belong to the same codex as Zoega no. 121:

Ejusdem codicis Sahidici, ex quo Zoega hæc partim ad verbum reddidit, partim excerptsit, suspicor esse fragmentum folii unius sub num. CXVI, p. 223, memoratum. Referente Zoega narrat ibi Jesus, *quomodo cum concepit Virgo Maria et peperit in Bethlehem prope monumentum Rachelis*. Conf. hist. Josephi cap. VII extr.²²

In addition to these, Forbes Robinson identified a Sahidic fragment in the British Museum (transferred later to the British Library), which belongs to yet another manuscript of the *History of Joseph*.²³ In a seminal article published in *Le Muséon* in 1953, Louis-Théophile Lefort added to the Sahidic codex first identified by Zoega five consecutive folios from the miscellaneous volume Copte 129¹⁷ of the National Library in Paris (BNF, Copte 129¹⁷, foll. 12–16).²⁴ Lefort was the one who organized codicologically the surviving Sahidic vestiges of the *History of Joseph* in four separate codices, which he designated with the letters A–D. Finally, in 2009 I edited in the same journal two small fragments in the National Library in Paris, which join together to form the bottom of a leaf (BNF, Copte 131⁸, fol. 148 + 132², fol. 40).²⁵ They belong to Lefort's Codex A, the best preserved Sahidic copy of the text. All the fragments of the *History of Joseph* in this dialect are written on parchment and come from the library of the White Monastery in Upper Egypt.²⁶

²² Thilo, *Codex apocryphus*, xxvi, referring to Zoega, *Catalogus*, 223 (= no. 116); see also Tischendorf, *Evangelia apocrypha*, xxxvii n. 1. The fragment was published for the first time by Revillout, *Apocryphes coptes*, 28–29 and reedited by Robinson, *Coptic Apocryphal Gospels*, 146–49.

²³ Robinson, *Coptic Apocryphal Gospels*, 148–51 (only the English translation, without the Coptic text). Description of the fragment in Walter Ewing Crum, *Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London: British Museum, 1905) 130 (= no. 296). The fragment's call number used to be Or. 3581B(11), but after the reorganization of the Sahidic fragments in the British Library, it became Or. 3581B, fol. 14.

²⁴ Lefort, "L'Histoire de Joseph." BnF Copte 129¹⁷, foll. 13–16 belong to Codex A according to Lefort's classification, whereas BnF Copte 129¹⁷, fol. 12 is the only known fragment of Lefort's Codex B. See below.

²⁵ Alin Suciu, "New Fragments from the Sahidic Version of the *Historia Josephi Fabri Lignarii*," *Mus* 122 (2009) 279–89.

²⁶ On the White Monastery library, see Tito Orlandi, "The Library of the Monastery of St. Shenute at Atripe," in *Perspectives on Panopolis: An Egyptian Town from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest* (ed. Arno Egberts, Brian P. Muhs, and Jacques van der Vliet; Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava 31; Leiden: Brill, 2002) 211–31.

<i>Codex A</i> (MONB.DI): ²⁷	Paris, BNF, Copte 131 ⁸ , fol. 148 + 132 ² , fol. 40 (<i>Hist. Joseph</i> title; 1.1–5) Vatican, Zoega 116 (<i>Hist. Joseph</i> 4.6–8.1)
<i>Codex B</i> :	Paris, BNF, Copte 129 ¹⁷ , foll. 13–16 (<i>Hist. Joseph</i> 17.1–23.2)
<i>Codex C</i> :	Paris, BNF, Copte 129 ¹⁷ , fol. 12 (<i>Hist. Joseph</i> 7.1–9.1)
<i>Codex D</i> :	London, British Library, Or. 3581B, fol. 14 (<i>Hist. Joseph</i> 13.6–15.2) Vatican, Zoega 121 (<i>Hist. Joseph</i> . 14.1–24.1)

Now, to these manuscript witnesses should be added a heretofore unidentified Sahidic fragment from the Duke Coptic manuscripts available in the online catalogue.²⁸ P. Duk. inv. 239 (*olim* Coptic MS. 12) is a fragment from a parchment codex that was acquired by purchase in 1970. Nothing is known concerning the provenance of the item. A paleographical comparison with the vestiges of the other four Sahidic codices of the *History of Joseph* indicated that the Duke fragment had not belonged to any of them. Thus, P. Duk. inv. 239 must be attributed to a fifth Sahidic manuscript of the *History of Joseph*, of which it is the only witness presently known.

This parchment fragment measures 16 × 27 cm and was written in two columns. However, much of the second column of the recto and, consequently, the first of the verso, have disappeared, only a few letters being preserved. On the bottom of the recto, which is the hair side of the skin, there is the figure of a bird drawn with the wings stretched. There are no traces of pagination or quire signature. The fragment can be perhaps dated paleographically to the eleventh century C.E.

The text of P. Duk. inv. 239 corresponds to chapters 26.5–28.2 of the *History of Joseph the Carpenter*. As I already said, this portion of the text was previously unattested in Sahidic. In chapter 26, Jesus Christ blesses those who will give alms in the name of his earthly father and commemorate him. Among the blessed are also the scribes who will copy the *History of Joseph*. The Duke fragment starts at this point of the narrative. Its incipit says that after the death of the scribes, Christ will remove their sins from the ledger (χειρόγρφον) and they shall escape the torments of the afterlife. For the poor persons who do not have the means to give alms to honor the saint, it is enough if they give the name of Joseph to one of their children. After the long lacuna, which encompasses most of the right-hand column on the recto and the left-hand column on the verso, the text continues

²⁷ This codex can be dated with some accuracy since we have another manuscript copied in the same scribe's hand and dated 962 C.E. See Suciú, "New Fragments from *Historia Josephi*," 282–84. This is the only codex from those mentioned above that has received a siglum (i.e., MONB.DI) in the *Corpus dei manoscritti copti letterari* (= CMCL) database. CMCL is a project led by Tito Orlandi (Rome/Hamburg), whose main purpose is the reconstruction of the dismembered White Monastery codices (<http://cmcl.aai.uni-hamburg.de/>). To each reconstructed manuscript are ascribed two letters of the Latin alphabet, which are preceded by the abbreviation MONB (= "Monastero Bianco").

²⁸ <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/scriptorium/papyrus/texts/coptic/litrary.html> (accessed October 2012). See also Leslie S. B. MacCoull, "Coptic Papyri in Duke University Collection," in *Coptic Studies: Acts of the Third International Congress of Coptic Studies*, Warsaw, 20–25 August 1984 (ed. Włodzimierz Godlewski; Warsaw: PWN - Editions scientifiques de Pologne, 1990) 225–26.

on the verso with the lament of Jesus over the remnants (λείψανον) of his father Joseph. Christ exhorts the reader not to blame death as Adam and Eve had done, because it was established by God. The text breaks off at this point, perhaps no more than three folios before the end of the text.

The new fragment in the Duke papyrus collection contains a few variant readings, most of them minor, which are not attested in any of the surviving versions of the text. One *lectio* is especially interesting: the reading “I will grant (χαρίζεσθαι) him to you as son in my kingdom” (recto, col. 1, lines 4–7 = 26.5) has not been recorded until now. Curiously enough, the same expression occurs in the Sahidic *Testament of Isaac* (CAVT 98),²⁹ a text with which the *History of Joseph* has some literary connections. The context and the argument are similar in both writings: those who honor Joseph and Isaac will gain the privilege of becoming their “sons” in the kingdom of God:

<i>History of Joseph</i>	<i>Testament of Isaac</i> (Kuhn) ³⁰
ⲧⲁⲭⲁⲓⲣⲓⲛⲉ ⲙⲓⲛⲟⲩ ⲛⲁⲕ ⲛⲓⲱⲛⲣⲉ	ⲧⲛⲁⲭⲁⲓⲣⲓⲛⲉ ⲛⲓⲛⲟⲩ ⲛⲓⲛⲧⲛ ⲛⲓⲛⲣⲉ ⲛⲓⲛⲧⲁⲛⲧⲣⲣⲟ
ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲛⲛⲓⲣⲣⲟ	
“I will grant him to you (sg.) as son in my kingdom”	“I will grant them to you (pl.) as sons in my kingdom”

The following lines contain the *editio princeps* of P. Duk. inv. 239. As the new fragment offers from time to time variant readings, which are not attested in the Bohairic and Arabic versions, I tried not to fill the lacunae except in the cases where the surviving letters allowed reconstruction with some degree of probability.

²⁹ This text is preserved in Coptic (both Sahidic and Bohairic dialects), Arabic, and Ethiopic. For the Sahidic text see Karl Heinz Kuhn, “The Sahidic Version of the Testament of Isaac,” *JTS* 8 (1957) 225–39 (edition of the Coptic text); idem, “An English Translation of the Sahidic Version of the Testament of Isaac,” *JTS* 18 (1967) 325–36. Two previously unidentified fragments of the *Testament of Isaac* belonged once to the Catholic University in Louvain. They perished together with other ancient manuscripts in a fire that devastated the library in Louvain in May 1940. Luckily, the fragments were published in Louis-Théophile Lefort, “Coptica Lovaniensia,” *Mus* 51 (1938) 1–32, at 59–60 (= nos. 52–53); republished in idem, *Les manuscrits coptes de l’Université de Louvain 1. Textes littéraires* (Louvain: Bibliothèque de l’Université, 1940) 139–40 (= nos. 52–53) and once more in idem, “Fragments coptes,” *Mus* 48 (1945) 97–120, at 114–15 (Coptic text), 120 (French translation). The Bohairic version is available in Ignazio Guidi, “Il Testamento di Isacco e il Testamento di Giacobbe,” *Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei, Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche* ser. 5, vol. 9 (1900) 223–64. For the Arabic and Ethiopic texts, see Martin Heide, *Die Testamente Isaaks und Jakobs. Edition und Übersetzung der arabischen und äthiopischen Versionen* (Aethiopistische Forschungen 56; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000).

³⁰ Coptic text in Kuhn, “The Sahidic Version,” 235.

P. Duk. inv. 239 recto (Hair side)

[]		[εναλχοογ]
†ναπω[ζ μπ]		[εφωανχπο ν̄]
χιροκραφον		[ογωηρε νεφ]
ενεγнове ταχα		μογτ[ε επεφραν]
[ριζε μ]μοφ νακ	5	χε ι[ωσνφ εφ†]
ν[ω]ηρε ζητα		εοο[γ μπεκραν]
μη[τ]ρρο:=		ν̄[νεζβωων]
δαφ ηη̄χι πι		ο[γδε πλοιμος]
ρα ηλααγ̄ ηβα		[ωωπε ζμπηι]
ζανος:= ειεμη	10	[ετμηαγ]
† ταηαγτη μ̄		[]
πμογ:= μη̄θοτ[ε]		[]
μπ̄ρρο ηκω		[]
ζ† ετ̄μπ̄το ε		[]
[βο] ^{vacat} λ επαιωτ	15	[]
[] ^{vacat} ι π̄βη		[]
[μα]ετ̄ε[]η		[]
[]ετκα		[]
[θαριζε ν̄]ζαρζ		[]
[η]ιμ:= αγω	20	[]
[ο]η εωωπε ογ		[]
ρωμε η̄ρηκε		[]
πε εμη̄ταφσι		νσε[]
νεγπορει η̄		αγζε ε[]
μαγ εειρε η̄η	25	ογωε[]

P. Duk. inv. 239 verso (Flesh side)

[	]	[±4]ϣκ εξ...
[	]	ετβηητ:= αγω
[	] ζωc	αιριμε <ε>ροq νογ
[αγcολc]εc ρη		νοc εναγ= αιπιρ
[ρενειqτ ηπει]ιπε	5	ρϣτ εβολ εχμ
[	]ρ	πϳλιψαν[ο]n
[	]	ετταληγ= αιρι
[	]	με <ε>ροq ειxω μ
[	]	μοc.= xε ω
[	]	10 πμογ πρϳογω
[	]	cϳ ετεxνη νημ=
[	]	ϣ πμογ πρϳ
[	]	τογνοc ηρμ
[	]	ριμε μν ^{vacat} [ρεν]
[	]	15 ληπει ^{vacat} [εγ]
[	]	οϣ ηαϣ[ογ]
[	]	αλλ[α πετριxη]
[	]	ογον [μ]η π[εν]
[	]	ταqτοϣκ ε[τ]
[	]	20 οικονομια n
[	αq]	ϣπηρε ητ
[μοοϣε νη]μαι		μινε:=
[εεραι ε]κγμε		Μηαρικε ριxμ
[μνηνοc η]ϣτορ		πμογ ηθ<ε> ηα
[τρ ηταqωπο]γ η	25	ααμ <μ>ητεγ

■ TRANSLATION:

(recto col. 1) [26.5.] [...] I will tear the ledger (χειρόγραφον) of their sins and I will grant (χαρίζεσθαι) him to you as son in my kingdom. And he shall not experience (πειρα) any torment (βάσανος) except (εἰ μήτι) the necessity (ἀνάγκη) of death and the fear of the river of fire which is in front of my Father [...] his tribunal (βῆμα) [...] that purifies (καθαρίζειν) all flesh (σάρξ). [6.] And again, if he is a poor man who does not have provisions (εὐπορεῖν) to do (col. 2) [that which I have said, if he begets a son and] calls [his name] J[oseph], glorifying [your name], no [famine nor (οὐδέ) plague (λοιμός) shall be in that house]. [...] (verso col. 1) [27.2.] [...] just as if (ὥς) [it was entangled] with iron [nails] [...] [4.] [...] [he went with] me [to] Egypt [and the great] troubles [that he endured] [...] (col. 2) because of me. And I wept for him for a long time. I spread over his honored remains (λείψανον) (and) I wept for him saying: [28.1.] 'O death, the destroyer of all craftsmanship (τέχνη), O death, the raiser of much weeping and sadness (λυπεῖν), but (ἀλλά) the one who is over everyone has appointed for you the amazing plan (οἰκονομία) of this sort. [2.] Do not blame death like Adam and his [wife did] [...]

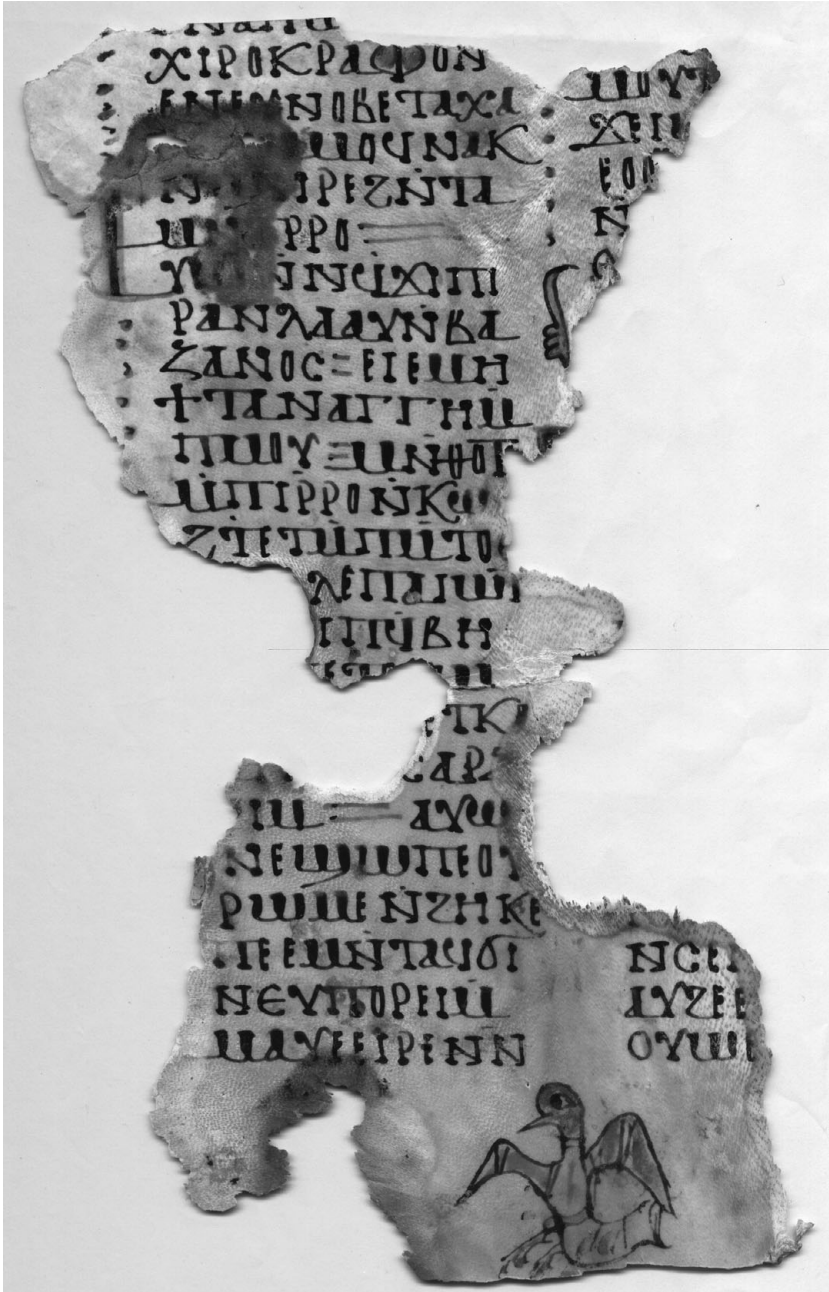


Fig. 1. P. Duk. inv. 239 recto



Fig. 2. P. Duk. inv. 239 verso