Two Coptic Prayers on Ostrakon (P.Berol. 709 and 9444+4790)

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Abstract: Edition, with philological and liturgical commentary, of two Theban 7th/8th century liturgical prayers in Sahidic Coptic from the Berlin Papyrus Collection. The first prayer is an unattested redaction of the intercession for peace, related to the wording of the anaphora of St. Mark. The second is a long and elaborate prayer of thanksgiving, asking for protection. It parallels the first prayer of the morning of the present-day Coptic rite.

Keywords: prayer, intercession, anaphora of St. Mark, liturgy of the hours, Thebes

<https://doi.org/10.1515/apf-2019-0008>

In his still fundamental summary of the literature in Western Thebes Walter E. Crum compiled a list of prayers written on ostraca of pottery and limestone, which witness the liturgy of the monasteries in the area.¹ The two ostraca to be edited here for the first time were already included in this list,² identified as a prayer “for Peace” and a prayer “at Morning Incense”, but they have not been paid further attention until now in spite of their interest for the history of the liturgy in Egypt. P.Berol. 709 contains an idiosyncratic variant of the intercession for the peace, different from the ones previously known from the area (P.Moscow Copt. 95 and

Vorbemerkung: I owe the permission to publish these ostraca to Prof. Verena Lepper, to whom I express my gratitude for providing the images as well. I also thank Anne Boud’hors for her comments on the editions.

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¹ Herbert E. Winlock and Walter E. Crum, *The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes. Vol. I* (New York, 1926), 198–199.

² The third Berlin ostrakon included in his list, P.Berol. 1086, has been recognized by the author as the bottom of BM EA 14180 (O.Brit. Mus. Copt. I p. 24. pl. 18.3) containing the same prayer in a different redaction as O.Frangé 730 and has been edited in the *Journal of Coptic Studies* 21 (2019), 161–173.

perhaps O.Petr. Mus. 19) with an unusual focus on the external enemies. P.Berol. 9444+4790 is a long and sophisticated prayer with unexpected Greek loanwords including κοσμοποιία ‘creation of the world’ and κόσμος in the meaning ‘beauty’, which can possibly be recognized as the prayer for the morning service. This article, besides editing the texts based on autopsy of the objects, also attempts to situate them in the context of the late antique liturgy in Egypt and in particular in Western Thebes.

1. P.Berol. 709: intercession for peace

Western Thebes?

h10.2 × w7.1 cm

Seventh or early eighth century

The irregular piece of reddish pottery preserves on both sides a Sahidic version of the intercessions for peace.³ The ostrakon is complete except for the bottom. The text is penned with black ink in sloping majuscules. The scribe began the prayer on the inner, convex side. He wrote the first six lines of the prayer in larger and thicker letters but continued in smaller letters from l. 7. The writing on the outer, concave side is also larger and thicker. Despite the uneven writing, the similarity of the letter forms suggests that the scribe was the same on the whole ostrakon. The text is faded in some places and the outer side was left blank after the end of the prayer.

The writing style is sloping majuscule with a not very marked angle. The letter forms are simple, without decorative hooks, and the line distance is minimal. α has a round belly and a straight back, the crossbar of η is ascending towards the right, κ is straight and not split, μ is done in three strokes, ο is small but not reduced to a dot. The hand resembles that of Mark the priest of the *topos* of St. Mark, especially his less formal writing as on O.Saint-Marc 130, although our scribe does not have the level of sophistication Mark’s style reaches. Another good parallel is P.Mon. Epiph. 597. On the basis of these parallels the hand might be dated to the early seventh century, but due to conservative tendencies in the region the rest of the seventh century and the early eighth cannot be excluded either. Although the piece was acquired in Cairo through the antiquities market, the style of the hand, reinforced by the close parallels from

³ The contents were first identified by Walter E. Crum in Winlock and Crum, *The Monastery of Epiphanius Vol. I*, 199. Walter Beltz, “Katalog der koptischen Handschriften der Papyrus-Sammlung der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin. Teil II,” *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 27 (1980), 128, IV 129 suggested, mistakenly, that it was a letter.

Western Thebes, supports the suggestion by Crum that the ostrakon comes from this area, where the absolute majority of liturgical ostraca were written.⁴

The language of the prayer is regular Sahidic, but the scribe writes ΝΕΜΕΝ for ΝΗΜΑΝ (l. 12), drops a Ν from ΩΑΝΣΤΗϣ, and spells σ consistently with a κ (ΤΕΝΚΕΝΒΩΚ for ΤΕΝΣΙΝΒΩΚ in ll. 16 and 17, ΚΕΠΗ for ΣΕΠΗ in l. 22, ΕϣΚΑΔΣΤ for ΕϣΣΕΡΔΣΤ in l. 24). This latter is a feature typical of the Theban area,⁵ which again supports the provenance. The scribe was copying from an exemplar, as evidenced by his mistake in l. 9, where he, lead visually by the two ω-s in ΧΩΩΡΕ in the line below, started writing two ω-s also after ΕΚΕΤΑΩ, the first of which he corrected into ϣ, while he left the other one in place. This confusion induced him to exchange in ΤΑΩϣ the feminine personal pronoun referring to ΕΙΡΗΝΗ into a masculine one. He moreover mixed up l. 23, where he reduplicated ΣΕ, then started copying ΕϣΔ, probably for ΕϣΔΡΚ, which he abandoned, and continued with the other verb. He also dropped ΕΤ from ΕΤΟΥΔΔΒ in l. 7.

The text is an intercession for peace. Such intercessions, for peace and other topics (such as the patriarch, the fruits of earth, or the deceased members of the community), can be found both as alone-standing prayers with an invocation of God and a final doxology, and as part of a sequence of intercessions in the anaphoras. The independent intercessions and the intercessions inside the anaphora concerning the same topic often share phrases or entire sequences. The independent intercession for the peace was already part of the Eucharistic service in the fifth century Alexandria and was recited together with a request for the patriarch and for the congregation after the departure of the catechumens and before the anaphora.⁶ In the present-day Coptic service it stands at the very beginning of the liturgy of the faithful after the prayer of the veil, as the first of the Three Great Prayers, recited for the peace, the patriarch, and the congregation (see ΝΙΧΩΜ ΝΤΕ ΝΙΕΥΧΟΛΟΓΙΟΝ ΕΘΟΥΔΔΒ [ed. ‘Abd al-Masīḥ Ṣalīb; Cairo, 1902], 276–279). The intercession for the peace within the anaphora of St. Mark (also called of St. Cyril), where it begins the chain

⁴ On liturgical ostraca see Ágnes T. Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri: An Introduction* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 166–167.

⁵ Paul E. Kahle, *Bala’izah: Coptic Texts from Deir el-Bala’izah in Upper Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 147.

⁶ Heinzgerd Brakmann, “Le déroulement de la Messe copte. Structure et histoire,” in *L’eucharistie: célébrations, rites, piétés* (ed. A.M. Triacca and A. Pistoia; Roma: C.L.V. Edizioni liturgiche, 1995), 120.

of intercessions, coincides with this text to a large degree. The first attestation of the intercession within the anaphora is in P.Strasb. inv. 254 (fourth–fifth century, ed. Jürgen Hammerstaedt, *Griechische Anaphorenfragmente aus Ägypten und Nubien* [Pap.Colon. XXVIII, Opladen: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 1999], 21–41). This short version of the intercession in P.Strasb. inv. 254 was expanded with additional phrases in the various redactions. The stock expressions and sequences of *cola* that accumulate in these redactions, both in the anaphora and in independent intercessions, add up to what might be called the ‘Markan tradition’ of this intercession (and of all other intercessions).⁷

P.Berol.709, as it begins straight with an invocation of God and is not continued on the verso with other requests, seems to be an independent intercession. It may belong to the preanaphoral part of the Eucharist, but this is not the only possibility, as independent intercessions appear also in other rites and not only in the Eucharist, e.g. the morning and evening offering of incense. Against this hypothesis speaks the lack of doxology and title, which is typical for copies of independent intercessions (e.g. O.Petr. Mus. 19, P.Moscow Copt. 95, P.Bal. I 30 fol. 9). Thus it cannot be excluded completely that the text was rather an extract from an anaphora, perhaps an alternative for the intercession for the peace, to be inserted in a complete anaphora. However, as the doxology could have been dropped due to its familiarity and titles can also be lacking in an informal copy (it is not added before the intercession for the dead in P.Ryl. III 465v either), it is more probable that the text was an independent intercession rather than an extract from an anaphora.

The exact wording of the intercession for the peace recorded on P.Berol. 709 or a version in another language is not attested in any other copies to my knowledge. It differs also from two other redactions of the same prayer from the region, P.Moscow Copt. 95 in Sahidic and O.Petr. Mus. 19 in Greek.⁸ Its text is nonetheless not completely unknown, as it is to a large extent a patchwork of phraseology attested also in other intercessions from the Egyptian liturgy, a typical feature of intercessions preserved on papyrus. Thus the citation from Ps. 120:8 in ll. 16–18 appears in

⁷ On the intercessions of the anaphora of St. Mark and the preanaphoral intercessions, see Hieronymus Engberding, “Das anaphorische Fürbittegebet der griechischen Markusliturgie,” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 30 (1964) 398–446, although many of his conclusions are outdated.

⁸ The provenance of this ostrakon from the Theban region is uncertain, another, though less likely possibility is Dendera, see O.Petr. Mus. 19 p. 5.

the ‘Markan tradition’ for the intercession for peace and for the patriarch. The introduction (ll. 4–7) is shared with the intercession for the peace on P.Moscow Copt. 95, r.14–15, and the same prayer has a variant of ll. 20–24 as well, which is furthermore shared with the intercession for the emperor in the anaphora of St. Mark/Cyril in certain redactions (e.g. that in the Great Euchologium, p. 39.4–5 (Emmanuel Lanne, *Le Grand Euchologe du Monastère Blanc* [Turnhout: Brepols, 1958], 292). The opening request in ll. 8–10 also draws on the formulation of the anaphora of St. Mark/Cyril, but it incorporates a phrase from Phil. 4:7. The section in ll. 10–15 has on the other hand no direct parallels and exhibits a unique emphasis on war and physical enemies otherwise absent from intercessions for peace. It is connected to a section of the intercession for peace in the ‘Markan tradition’, but that text prays for the safety of the own soldiers and rulers instead of the defeat of the enemy. The idiosyncratic character of the section might indicate that it was a local feature, or perhaps even a temporally restricted variation, inspired by the turbulences of the seventh century, the Persian and the Arab invasions (for this, see commentary to ll. 10–16). However, as we have this single, somewhat muddled copy of the prayer and thus no clues for the extent of its circulation, such a suggestion must remain a speculation.

inner side

- 1 [Τ]Ν̄CΟΠC ΔΥ[Ω] Τ̄Ν̄-
ΠΑΡΑΚΑΛΕΙ Μ̄Μ[ΟΚ]
Π̄ΧΟΙC Π̄ΝΟΥΤΕ Π̄ΠΑΝ-
ΤΟΚΡΑΤΩΡ ΕΤΒΕ
5 ΤΕΙΡΗΝΗ Ν̄ΤΚΑΘΟ-
Λ[Ι]ΚΗ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ
<ΕΤ>ΟΥΑΔΒ ΜΑΥΑΔC ΧΕΚΑC
ΤΕΚΕΡΗΝΗ ΕΤΧΟCΕ ΕΜΕΕΥΕ
ΝΙΜ ΕΚΕΤΑΩϣ {Ω} ΕΖΡΑΪ
10 ΖΝ Ν̄Ν̄ΖΗΤ Ν̄ΓΧΩΩΡΕ ΕΒΟΛ
Ν̄ΝΕΤΟΥΩϣ ΕΠΩΛΗΜΕΙ
ΝΕΜΕΝ Ν̄ΓΟΥΩΩϣ Ν̄ΝΕΥ-
ΜΕΕΥΕ Ν̄ΖΗΤ Μ̄ΜΑΤΟΙ
Μ̄Ν Ν̄ΤΗΜΟC ΕΤΕΧΕΚΕ ΖΗ-
15 [Γ]ΕΜΩΝ Μ̄Ν ΝΕΠΑΡΧΟC
[Ν̄ΓΚΟCΜ]ΕΙ Ν̄ΤΕΝΚΕΝΒΩΚ

[ΕΒΟΛ ΜΝ] ΤΕΝΚΕΝΒΩΚ
 [ΕΖΟΥΝ ΖΝ] ΤΕΡΗΝΗ ΜΑ-
 []ΧΩ
 - - - - -

P.Berol. 709, S. 1

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outer side

20 ΜΑΡΕΝΕΚΜΝΤ-
ΩΔΣΤΗϢ ΤΔΣΟΝ
ΣΝΟΥΚΕΠΗ ΕΤΡΕΝΕΙΡΕ
ΝΟΥΔΣΕ {ΣΕ ΕΨΔΑ}
ΕΨΚΑΔΣΤ ΝΔΝ'/

2 παρακαλεῖν 3-4 παντοκράτωρ 5 εἰρήνη 5-6 καθολική 6 ἐκκλησία 8 εἰρήνη
9 согг. ex. таѡѡ, l. таѡс 11 πολεμεῖν 14 δῆμος 14-15 ἡγεμόν 15 ἑπαρχος
16 κοσμεῖν 18 εἰρήνη 21 l. ѡΔΝΣΤΗϢ 24 l. ΕΨΚΑΔΣΤ, ΝΔΝ согг. ex. ѡΔΝ

8-9 Phil. 4:7 16-18 Ps. 120:8

P.Berol. 709, S. 2

Translation

We beg and we beseech you Lord, God Almighty for I⁵ the peace of the I one holy I catholic Church, I establish your peace that surpasses all thought I¹⁰ into our hearts, destroy those who want to wage war with us, crush their thoughts (of?) the soldiers and the people that ... I¹⁵ hegemon and the eparchs, and adorn our going in and our going out in peace... I²⁰ may your mercies come upon us quickly so that we live a life that is quiet to us.

Commentary

1–7 The intercession begins with a stereotyped request to God, similarly to the intercessions of the anaphora of St. Mark/Cyril in Prague, Or. Inst. MS II p. 4.4–5 (Valerie Hažmuková, “Miscellaneous Coptic Prayers II,” *Archiv Orientalní* 9 [1937] 122). The peace of the church is expressed probably with the same expression in P.Moscow Copt. 95, where however only $\epsilon\tau\beta\epsilon$ $\dagger\rho\eta\eta\eta$ at the end of r.14 and $\mu\alpha\gamma\alpha\lambda\alpha\varsigma$ at the beginning of the next line is preserved. The Church attracts various attributes in liturgical language. The standard four of the Alexandrian liturgy is $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\acute{\iota}\alpha$, $\mu\acute{o}\nu\eta$, $\kappa\alpha\theta\omicron\lambda\iota\kappa\acute{\eta}$ and $\acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron\sigma\tau\omicron\lambda\iota\kappa\acute{\eta}$, of which $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\acute{\iota}\alpha$ is always present, while the others are variable (Achim Budde, *Die ägyptische Basilios-Anaphora. Text–Kommentar–Geschichte*. [Münster: Aschendorff, 2004], 435). The presence of the adjective $\mu\acute{o}\nu\eta$ is an Egyptian characteristic visible already in the fourth-fifth century in P.Strasb. inv. 254 r.20 (Hammerstaedt, *Griechische Anaphorenfragmente*, 24). In Sahidic it is translated as $\tau\epsilon\iota\omicron\upsilon\gamma\epsilon\iota$ $\mu\alpha\gamma\alpha\lambda\alpha\varsigma$ in the Great Euchologium, p. 101.24 (Lanne, *Le Grand Euchologe*, 312), while Louvain, Ms Lefort copt. 28A fol. IV r.16–17 (ed. Jean Doresse and Emmanuel Lanne, *Un témoin archaïque de la liturgie copte de S. Basile*. [Louvain, Institut Orientaliste–Publications Universitaires, 1960], 22) offers the translation $[\epsilon]\tau\omicron\gamma\alpha\lambda\alpha\varsigma$. Here the simple solution $\mu\alpha\gamma\alpha\lambda\alpha\varsigma$ is chosen.

7–10 The formulation of the request for the intercession is close to that of the anaphora of St. Mark/Cyril, as evidenced already in the first witness, P.Strasb. inv. 254 r.22–23: $\tau\eta\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\xi\ \omicron\upsilon[\rho]\alpha\gamma\omega\nu\ \epsilon\acute{\iota}\rho\eta\nu[\eta\nu]\ \beta\rho\acute{\alpha}\beta[\epsilon]\nu\text{-}\sigma\omicron[\nu\ \tau\alpha\acute{\iota}\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omega\nu\ \eta\mu\acute{\omega}\nu\ \kappa\alpha\rho\delta\acute{\iota}[\alpha\iota\varsigma]$. The phrase is translated into Coptic as $\dagger\rho\eta\eta\eta$ $\Delta\epsilon$ $\epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda$ $\gamma\epsilon\eta$ | $\eta\epsilon\mu\eta\eta\omicron\gamma\epsilon$ $\tau\alpha\chi\rho\omicron\varsigma$ $\epsilon\gamma\rho\alpha\iota$ | $\eta\gamma\eta\tau\epsilon\eta$ in Prague, Or. Inst. MS II p. 4.10–12 (Hažmuková, “Miscellaneous Coptic Prayers II”, 122), whereas P.Berol. 709 uses the verb $\tau\omega\omega$. It also diverges from the ‘Markan’ wording in introducing $\tau\epsilon\kappa\epsilon\rho\eta\eta\eta$ $\epsilon\tau\chi\omicron\varsigma\epsilon$ $\epsilon\mu\epsilon\epsilon\gamma\epsilon$ $\eta\eta\mu$

from Phil. 4:7 instead of the ‘peace from heaven’. The wording of the Pauline citation corresponds to the text of the Sahidic Bible (G.W. Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Southern Dialect*. Vol. V. *The Epistles of Saint Paul (continued)*. [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920], 308).

10–16 This section of the intercession, placed after the initial request for peace and before the citation of Ps. 120:8, which asks for the destruction of the enemies, diverges from all other known wordings of the intercession for peace. The lack of parallels, together with some likely irregularity in the spelling, renders the understanding of ll. 12–15 (ⲛⲁⲟⲩⲱⲩⲁ ⲛⲛⲉⲩⲱⲙⲉⲩⲱⲉ ⲛⲁⲩⲏⲧ ⲙⲙⲁⲩⲟⲓ | ⲙⲛ ⲛⲧⲏⲙⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲉⲭⲉⲕⲉ ⲁⲩⲓⲣⲉⲙⲱⲛ ⲙⲛ ⲛⲉⲡⲁⲣϣⲟⲥ) difficult. The letters are clear with the exception of the ⲏ at the end of l. 14, but as they stand, they do not make sense. Two unclear points obscure the meaning: the syntactical role of ⲙⲙⲁⲩⲟⲓ | ⲙⲛ ⲛⲧⲏⲙⲟⲥ and the meaning of ⲉⲧⲉⲭⲉⲕⲉ. For the first we may either suppose that they develop the third person plural of the possessive article of ⲛⲛⲉⲩⲱⲙⲉⲩⲱⲉ, in which case an extra possessive ⲛ̄ should be restored before ⲙⲙⲁⲩⲟⲓ and the phrase should be translated as “destroy their thoughts, of the soldiers and the people”. However, we might also assume that these words are objects of a verb which has disappeared, the meaning of which could have been something like “destroy”. As for ⲉⲧⲉⲭⲉⲕⲉ, we may either assume a superfluous ⲉ and read ⲉⲧⲭⲉⲕⲉ ⲁⲩⲓⲣⲉⲙⲱⲛ ⲙⲛ ⲛⲉⲡⲁⲣϣⲟⲥ “that sting the hegemon and the eparchs”, which might develop “the soldiers and the people”, or “their thoughts”. What precisely that would mean remains unclear; it might refer to disobedient people and armies, which annoy the rulers with rebellious thoughts. Another option is to suppose the loss of two ⲛs and restore ⲉⲧⲉⲭⲏⲉ ⲛⲕⲉⲁⲩⲏⲩⲉⲙⲱⲛ “that destroy also the *hegemons* and the *eparchs*”, which is best taken to “the soldiers and the people”. If this is accepted, does the text speak of foreign armies that defeat the local officers? Due to the distortions in the text, these suggestions remain uncertain.

The corresponding intercession from the ‘Markan tradition’ has a similar section in this position, already present in the earliest extant redaction, P.Strasb. inv. 254 r.26–29: τὸν ἡγούμενον τῆς ἐπ[αρχίας τὰ | σ]τρατιωτικὰ τοὺς ἄρχον[τ]ας· βουλ[ὰς δῆμους | γειτονίας ἡμῶν εἰσόδους καὶ] ἐξό[δους ἡμῶν | ἐν πάσῃ εἰρήνῃ κατακόσμησον] “adorn in all peace the hegemon of the eparchy, the military, the leaders, the councils, the people, our neighbourhoods, our going in and our going out”. P.Berol. 709.10–16

seems to be a variation of this phrase or a phrase similar to it, even using some of the vocabulary, as ΜΜΑΤΟΙ (which translates τὰ στρατιωτικά also in the corresponding section of Prague, Or. Inst. MS II p. 4.15 [Hažmuková, “Miscellaneous Coptic Prayers II”, 122], ΤΗΜΟΣ, which also appears in the list of O.Petr. Mus. 19 r.4 (and perhaps also in P.Strasb. inv. 254 r.27, now in the lacuna). Moreover, the words ΖΗΓΕΜΩΝ Μῆ ΝΕΠΑΡΧΟΣ might have a connection to ἡγούμενος τῆς ἐπαρχίας. The expression appears only in P.Strasb. inv. 254, it is already absent from the next witness of the prayer in time, the anaphora of St. Mark and the independent intercession for peace included in the Aksumite canonico-liturgical collection, the text of which dates from the end of the fifth or beginning of the sixth century.⁹ The uniqueness of the mention of this office in P.Strasb. inv. 254 and its subsequent disappearance underscores the observation of Hammerstaedt (*Griechische Anaphorenfragmente*, 34), who suggested that the ἡγούμενος τῆς ἐπαρχίας, an office which appeared with the reforms of Diocletian at the end of the third century, would probably only be mentioned second after the emperor as long as the prefects of the Egyptian provinces communicated directly with the emperor, but not after 380/382, when the *prefectus augustalis* of the diocese *Aegyptus* became their direct boss. Moreover, from the fifth century on the word ἡγούμενος is increasingly reserved for the leaders of monasteries. In such a situation it can be imagined that with time the clause ἡγούμενος τῆς ἐπαρχίας turned into something like ἡγεμὼν καὶ ἑπαρχος in a local variant instead of dropping out, and this modified clause was picked up by the author of the prayer on P.Berol. 709.

In spite of the parallels of vocabulary, the list of officers and soldiers plays an opposite role in P.Berol. 709 to what it usually does in the intercessions for peace. Whereas in the wording of the anaphora of St. Mark

⁹ I owe this information to Reinhard Messner. The Aksumite canonico-liturgical collection is preserved in a medieval Ethiopic manuscript, but goes back to a late antique translation of an Alexandrian canonical collection, made directly from the Greek. On the manuscript, see Alessandro Bausi, “La Collezione aksumita canonico-liturgica,” *Adaman-tius* 12 (2006) 43–70, especially 45 and 60–61. The liturgical texts of the Aksumite collection are not yet edited, but an English translation of the independent intercession for the king, the anaphora of St. Mark, the anaphora of the Apostles, and the prayers following the anaphoras are available in Emmanuel Fritsch, “New Reflections on the Late Antique and Medieval Ethiopian Liturgy,” in *Liturgy’s Imagined Past/s: Methodologies and Materials in the Writing of Liturgical History Today* (ed. Teresa Berger and Bryan D. Spinks; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2016), 44 and 47–54.

the request is made for the own kings, officers, armies, and people to live in peace, here the request is made for crushing the enemies and their evil intentions. Such requests with explicit reference to war are not to be found in other requests for peace. Indeed, the only intercessions where physical war is referred to are the independent intercession for the emperor in the Aksumite collection and the intercession for the emperor in the anaphora of St. Mark/Cyril. In the intercession of the Aksumite collection God is asked to “submit the enemy, the nations” (Fritsch, “New Reflections”, 44). The same phrase reads as “submit all the barbaric people who want war” in the redaction of the anaphora of St. Mark/Cyril of the Kacmarcik codex, whereas in the same text the deacon’s call asks to “subdue to them all internal and external enemy (ἐχθρὸν καὶ πολέμιον)” (William F. Macomber, “The Anaphora of Saint Mark According to the Kacmarcik Codex,” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 45 [1979] 83–84). Intercessions for the patriarch and for the congregation also speak of enemies and their dispersal. The intercession for the congregation on BKT VI 7 2v ll. 21–25 offers even a parallel to our wording, διασκέ[δα]σον αὐτον (l. αὐτῶν) πᾶσαν ἐπιβουλὴν πονηρὰν καθ’ ἡμῶν γινουμένον (l. γινομένην). However, these latter intercessions speak of spiritual war with demons or conflict with internal enemies rather than actual war. Thus the long, elaborate request for the defeat of enemies is without good parallels. This uniqueness of the expression as well as its connection to the list of secular authorities in the intercession for peace in the ‘Markan tradition’ raises the possibility that this might be a secondary development, a variation bound to the historical situation in which the ostrakon was copied. The first half of the seventh century was marked by the invasion of the Persians and the Arabs, which events might have prompted a temporary shift of focus from the peace of the own troops to the defeat of the enemy. However, this interpretation is rather uncertain, especially in view of the textual problems of the copy and the lack of information on the circulation of this redaction. Thus the text might not be anything else than a local variant of the intercession for peace without any particular connection to the turbulent events of the seventh century.

16–18 Cf. Ps. 120:8 $\text{ⲕⲏⲁⲁⲁⲓⲣⲉⲛⲉⲓ ⲉⲧⲉⲕⲉⲓⲛⲉⲓ ⲉⲁⲟⲩⲛ ⲙⲏ ⲧⲉⲕⲉⲓⲛⲉⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ}$ (E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Earliest Known Coptic Psalter*. [London: Kegan Paul/Trench/Trübner, 1898], 135). This expression is included in the intercession for peace in the ‘Markan tradition’, it is present already in P.Strasb. inv. 254 r.27. The Sahidic translation of Prague, Or.Inst. MS II

p. 5.2–3 has $\overline{\text{NENGINBOK}} \overline{\text{EBOL}}$ for ἔξοδος (Hažmuková, “Miscellaneous Coptic Prayers II”, 122).

18–19 The text cannot be reconstructed, as the ostrakon breaks off. It is unclear how much was lost.

20–24 The same expressions can be restored on P.Moscow Copt. 95r.19–21: $\overline{\text{MA}} \overline{\text{PENEKMNTO}} \overline{\text{ANZTH}} \overline{\text{Q}} \mid [\overline{\text{TANON}} \overline{\text{ZNOYBEPH}} \overline{\text{ETRENEIP}}] \overline{\text{E}} \overline{\text{NOYAZE}} \overline{\text{ECCE}} <\text{P}> \overline{\text{AZT}} \overline{\text{AYW}} \mid [\overline{\text{EYTOPK}}]$ (cf. Mihálykó, *Writing the Christian Liturgy*, 284).¹⁰ The supplement of the second verb is based on a parallel in the intercession for the emperor of the anaphora of St. Mark/Cyril in the Great Euchologium, p. 39.4–5: $\overline{\text{XECAC}} \overline{\text{ZOWN}} \overline{\text{ENENONZ}} \overline{\text{ZN}} \overline{\text{OYBIOC}} \mid \overline{\text{ECCEPAZT}} \overline{\text{AYW}} \overline{\text{EYTOPK}}$ (Lanne, *Le Grand Euchologe*, 292). The verb $\overline{\text{EYTOPK}}$ might have been intended as well in $\overline{\text{EYZA}}$, but the second half of the verb together with the conjunction might have been dropped. This would mean an inverted order of the clauses compared to the order in P.Moscow Copt. 95 and in the wording of the anaphora. Whatever his exemplar might have been, the scribe apparently got confused, reduplicated $\overline{\text{ZE}}$, started copying $\overline{\text{EYZAPK}}$, which he did not finish, and passed on to the other verb, $\overline{\text{ECCKAZZT}}$, where he inserted a superfluous $\overline{\text{Z}}$ (the P is also missing in P.Moscow Copt. 95.20 and might have been the orthography of the place and period). P.Berol. 709 finishes with a redundant $\overline{\text{NAN}}$, but P.Moscow Copt. 95 and the intercessions for the king from the anaphora continue with a phrase $\overline{\text{NCEZE}} \overline{\text{EPON}} \overline{\text{ZN}} \mid \overline{\text{MNTYCEBHC}} \overline{\text{NIM}} \overline{\text{MN}} \overline{\text{MNTCEMNOC}} \overline{\text{NIM}}$ (Lanne, *Le Grand Euchologe*, 292), which leads to the doxology. This phrase and the doxology are missing here, although there was ample space. The scribe might not have considered the doxology necessary, as it was standard.

¹⁰ The end of this phrase is also found at the end of the independent intercession for peace in the Aksumite collection, as I have been informed by Reinhard Messner.

2. P.Berol. 9444+4970: morning prayer

Western Thebes¹¹

h27 × w23.7 cm

Seventh or early eighth century

The three pieces of limestone, which join and belong to the same ostrakon of considerable size, contain a prayer with thanksgiving and request for protection, probably a prayer for the morning.¹² The two pieces of inv. 4970 join along a long edge. They were bought together, have been recognized as belonging together, and were catalogued together. Inv. 9444, which was bought separately, also joins along the lower edge with inv. 4970 on the front, and on the back a short part of the lower right edge of inv. 9444 connects to the upper left edge of inv. 4970A (ll. 32–33, in l. 32 n and in l. 33 c is on both ostraca). Close to all margins of inv. 9444 have been preserved almost completely, with only the lower right and left edges being incomplete. However, much is chipped away from the surface on both sides. The two pieces of inv. 4970 also have almost complete edges, except for fragment A, where the upper right edge (front) is broken. The surface is damaged also here, especially on the verso. Even where the surface is intact, some letters are faded. Due to the damaged surface some line ends and beginnings, sometimes up to half of the line, as well as the entire l. 10, are lost (ll. 6–13 of the front and several lines of the back). The damage prevents the reconstruction of some of the text.

The text starts with a staurogram. Cola are divided irregularly with short curving strokes placed in the upper index. In l. 15 and 23 a double dot is used to divide two larger sections, and in l. 27 a high dot is used for the same purpose. The scribe corrected himself in l. 2 by rubbing out a word.

The writing is a large and informal upright majuscule. It resembles the writing of Psate and Sousanna, who wrote to the monk Frange in the early eighth century (e.g. O.Frangé 353–356). This would suggest a date into the early eighth century. However, similar informal majuscules can be recovered from the early seventh century as well, e.g. O.Saint-Marc 73

¹¹ Both items were bought in Thebes, 4970 in 1889, and 9444 in 1890. The material, limestone, which was used for writing texts especially in the monasteries of Western Thebes, also suggests one of these monasteries or hermitages as the origin.

¹² They were first recognized as prayers and as belonging together by Walter E. Crum in Winlock and Crum, *The Monastery of Epiphanius, Vol. I*, 199. Subsequently Walter Beltz (“Katalog Teil II”, 172, IV 1045 and 1050) catalogued them separately, inv. 4970 as a prayer and 9444 as a hymn.

and 74, written to Mark of the topos of Saint Mark. Thus both the seventh and the early eighth centuries, the entire period of activity of the monasteries of Western Thebes, remain possible.

The language of the prayers is a relatively pure Sahidic. The original Greek is transparent in several loanwords, some of which show a degree of sophistication, especially κόσμος in the classical meaning of ‘beauty, ornament, order’, οἰκονομία τῆς σῆς κοσμοποιίας in ll. 25–26, or ναυαγία in ll. 34–35. The parallel constructions of ll. 11–15 also suggest a rhetorically elaborate original (cf. commentary to lines).

The three fragments preserve one or less probably two prayers. The number of the prayers depends on the interpretation of ll. 20–21 on the back. L. 21 preserves rests of a doxology, which might close the first prayer; thus l. 22 would open a new prayer. However, in this case the first prayer would be virtually without a request. Also, what remains of l. 22 does not suggest an opening with an invocation of God. Therefore it is more likely that we are faced with only one long prayer. In this case, the doxology of l. 21 can be understood as the end of the doxology begun but not finished in ll. 42–43. The scribe, forced by the lack of space, copied the end of the doxology on the top margin in slightly smaller letters. While it is curious that the scribe considered it necessary to copy the end of a simple doxology, the most conventional part of a prayer, *in extenso*, this is exactly what the scribe of O.Frangé 730 did.¹³ Therefore the same practice may be suggested here, even if the state of preservation does not allow for certainty. The scribe perhaps wanted to make sure it is the right doxology that is being recited. Thus it is reasonable to suppose that the entire ostrakon contained one very long prayer and l. 21 is containing the final phrases of the doxology, the beginning of which is in ll. 42–43 and which the scribe could not finish there due to a lack of space.

The prayer starts with thanksgiving for the salvation and safety of the congregation, then continues with a thanksgiving for creation, and ends with requests for safeguarding and assistance for a good life. These topics coincide with those of the so-called ‘prayer of thanksgiving’ or ‘first prayer of the morning’ of the present-day rite,¹⁴ although the wording is

¹³ Ágnes T. Mihálykó, “Witnesses of a »Prayer of Offering« in Sahidic from the White Monastery and the Thebaid,” *JCS* 17 (2015), 133.

¹⁴ The text of this prayer is preserved to us in Greek in the Kacmarcik Codex (ed. William F. Macomber, “The Greek Text of the Coptic Mass and of the Anaphoras of Basil and Gregory According to the Kacmarcik Codex,” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 43 [1977], 315–316), in Sahidic Coptic in an 11–12th century manuscript written in a Sahidic

not shared. The first prayer of the morning is recited at the beginning of most Coptic services, including the morning offering of incense and the Eucharist. The prayer of this ostrakon on the other hand seems to have had a more restricted use. The references to the day, the sun, and the light in ll. 17–19 position the prayer in a morning setting, which recommends the Eucharist or the morning prayer. In the churches of Western Thebes a daily morning prayer was recited and the Eucharist was said twice a week, on Saturday in the evening and Sunday in the morning.¹⁵ The potential reference to “this σύναξις” in l. 6 might indicate a setting in the Sunday morning Eucharist, as the corresponding verb συνάγειν acquired the specialized meaning “perform the Eucharist, take communion” in the Thebaid. However, in Shenoute’s Canons σύναξις could still denote any religious assembly,¹⁶ and it could have had this broader meaning when the text was composed for a certain service. The appearance of this word therefore did not necessarily restrict the use of this prayer to the Eucharist, it could also have been recited in the morning service of every day.¹⁷

front

9444 1 ⲡⲓⲛⲉϥϣⲁⲣⲓⲥⲧⲉⲓⲛⲁⲕⲛⲁⲕⲟⲓⲥ
 [ⲛ]ⲛⲟϥⲧⲉⲛⲛⲁⲛⲧⲟⲕⲣⲁⲧⲱⲣⲛⲁⲓⲉⲛ-
 [ⲧ]ⲁⲣⲁⲕⲛⲟⲛⲁⲣⲧⲁⲛⲛⲟⲛⲉⲃⲟⲗⲛⲓⲧⲙ

tainted with Fayumic forms, Prague, Or.Inst. MS I p.1–3 (ed. Valerie Hažmuková, “Miscellaneous Coptic Prayers,” *Archiv Orientální* 8 [1936], 325–326, and in the Bohairic textus receptus (J.P. Bute, *The Coptic Morning Service for the Lord’s Day* [London: J. Masters & Co, 1882], 3–8).

¹⁵ Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 141 and 145.

¹⁶ Bentley Layton, *The Canons of Our Fathers: Monastic Rules of Shenoute* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 70.

¹⁷ The prayer for the evening service in the same time and period can be identified in P.Rain. Unterricht Kopt. 197 verso (= BM EA 5895, ed. O.Brit. Mus. Copt. I p. 138, pl. 100,7) This coincides with the prayer of evening offering of incense in the present-day rite, which is recited only on days before a Eucharistic service. However, there is nothing to suggest that the prayer could not have had a broader use in the seventh century Western Thebes as the evening prayer for every day, regardless of the presence of a Eucharistic celebration. Indeed, Hans Quecke argued that in the late antique and medieval times the equivalent of the morning and evening offering of incense was still celebrated every day (*Untersuchungen zum koptischen Stundengebet* [Louvain-la-Neuve: Institute Orientaliste, 1970], 2–13). It is in such a daily morning and evening prayer, which later became associated with the Eucharist, that P.Berol. 9444+4790 and P.Rain. Unterricht Kopt. 197v could have its place.

back

9444 20 .
 [ca. 8–13? ε]νεεε ελ[μην]
 [ca. 7–11]νεκτα[μιο? ca. 5–10
 [ca. 6–10 ω]πηρε: χε[ca. 6–11]
 [ca. 5–8] γχ[^] ναν μπ[ca. 4–7]
 25 εμ πιναυ εβολ[^] εραϊ [ετοι-]
 [κο]νομια νεκκοσμοπο[ια ca. 2–5]
 ωπηρε νετοκ γαρ πετε<ρε>π[τηρ[^]? εγπο-]
 ταεεε νாக[^] εγο νεμεε[λ ca. 8–13]
 9444+4790 εωντ[^] νιμ[^] ετνναυ ε[ροογ μν νε-]
 30 τνναυ εροογ αν[^] εχ[^] ε[οογ νாக | ε]τ[ε]ε [πα]ι
 [τ]νσοπεε αγω τνπαρεε[αλει] μ|μοκ πχοϊε
 [χεεεε ε]κεεεεε ερον[^] αγω | νεσκεεεεε
 [μμον εβολ ε]νε ρε[ε]εεεεεεεεεε νιμ
 4790 [μν/ε ca. 2–3]εε νιμ[^] μν ναυ[ε-]
 35 [ε]ε νιμ[^] ε μοκεεε νιμ
 αγω νεεογεεεε νε[εεε]
 [ν]αν[^] εερεεεεεε ερεεε
 εεε τηρεε[^] πνεεεε εεε
 [π]τηρεε[^] νεε[^] ογεεεεε ναν εε-
 40 [ρεε] πεεεεεεεεεε μν [πεεε]
 [ε]εεε νεεεεεε[ε τη-]
 εογ εεεεε
 εεεεε

1 εὐχαριστεῖν 2 παντοκράτωρ 6 σύναξις 11 γένος, κόσμος 13 κτίσμα 14 τάξις
 15 εὐχαριστεῖν 16 πάλιν, εὐχαριστεῖν 25–26 οἰκονομία 26 κοσμοποιία
 29–30 ὑποτάσσειν 31 παρακαλεῖν 32 σκεπάζειν 33 σκάνδαλον 34–35 ναυαγία

12 Acts 17:29 13 Wis. 13:5 27–28 1 Cor. 15:28 29–30 Col. 1:16 36 2 Thess. 3:5

Translation

We give thanks to you, Lord | God {Almighty}, he who | acquired us, who quickened us through | his holy Son Jesus Christ, we bless |⁵ you and we glorify you, Lord, | for this service ... | and you showed us the way... | so that we acquire... |¹⁰ who created everything in a richness | for your offspring to the adornment of | your things and your good things, | to a

beauty of your holy creatures | and an order of your good creatures: |¹⁵ we give thanks to you, | again we give thanks | for the day, for | the sun and the | light | ... {ever amen} | ... your creatures (?) | ... wonder (?): that | ... to us |²⁵... in glimpsing (?) the | economy of your creation of the world (in a?) | wonder, because you are to whom (everything?) | is subject, being servant... | all creatures visible and |³⁰ invisible, glorifying you, because of this | we pray and beseech you, Lord, | that you preserve us and protect | us from all those who cause us to stumble | and all... and all shipwreck |³⁵ and all grief | and direct the hearts | for us so that we wish to work | for you (?) all, God who gives | all, give us zeal |⁴⁰ to do what is good and what | pleases you in all our days | because yours | is the power ⁽²¹⁾<(and the glory forever and) ever amen>.

P.Berol. 9444+4970, S. 2

Commentary

1 $\overline{\tau\eta\epsilon\chi\alpha\rho\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota}\ \overline{\kappa\alpha\kappa}$: The same phrase opens the call for prayer at the beginning of the first prayer of the day and follows the address of God at the beginning of the prayer itself (Bute, *The Coptic Morning Service*, 3–4). In the Sahidic translation of Prague, Or. Inst. MS I p. 1 l. 1 and p. 2 l. 1 the Coptic equivalent $\overline{\omega\epsilon\pi\epsilon\zeta\epsilon\mu\alpha\tau}$ is used.

2 $[\overline{\eta}]\overline{\nu\omicron\upsilon\gamma\epsilon}\ [\overline{\pi\pi\alpha\nu\tau\omicron\kappa\rho\alpha\tau\omega\rho}]$: The scribe was probably carried away by habitude to write the customary Coptic liturgical address for God, “Lord God Almighty”, but realized that his exemplar did not have the epithet and deleted it. This level of attention to an exemplar is remarkable for a liturgical prayer, where such extent of variation often goes unnoticed, see e.g. Mihálykó, “Witnesses of a »Prayer of Offering«”, 131–135.

2–4 $\overline{\pi\alpha\iota}\ \overline{\epsilon\eta}\ [\overline{\tau}]\overline{\delta\alpha\chi\pi\omicron\nu}\ \overline{\delta\alpha\tau\alpha\nu\zeta\omicron\nu}\ \overline{\epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda}\ \overline{\zeta\iota\tau\overline{\mu}}\ |\ \overline{\pi\epsilon\varphi\omega\eta\rho\epsilon}\ \overline{\epsilon\tau\omicron\gamma\alpha\lambda\beta}\ \overline{\iota\varsigma}\ \overline{\pi\epsilon\chi\varsigma}$: The epithet of God introduces a typical topic of thanksgiving. The sequence “acquire us” and “quicken us” is reminiscent of the sequence $\kappa\tau\eta\sigma\alpha\iota\ \eta\mu\acute{\alpha}\varsigma\ \acute{\omicron}\ \Theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\kappa\tau\acute{\omicron}\varsigma\ \sigma\omicron\upsilon\ \acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omicron\nu\ \omicron\upsilon\kappa\ \omicron\iota\delta\alpha\mu\epsilon\nu\ ,\ \tau\acute{\omicron}\ \acute{\omicron}\nu\omicron\mu\acute{\alpha}\ \sigma\omicron\upsilon\ \acute{\omicron}\nu\omicron\mu\acute{\alpha}\text{--}\zeta\omicron\mu\epsilon\nu\ ,\ \zeta\omega\omicron\omicron\pi\omicron\iota\eta\sigma\omicron\nu\ \tau\acute{\alpha}\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omega\nu\ \eta\mu\acute{\omega}\nu\ \psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ (Macomber, “The Anaphora of Saint Mark”, 80) of the intercession for the peace of the anaphora of St. Mark/Cyril, the first part of which relies on Isa. 26:13. Our prayer might have drawn inspiration from this sequence.

6 $\overline{\tau\epsilon\iota\varsigma\gamma\eta\nu}[\overline{\lambda}]\overline{\xi\iota\varsigma}$: In the first prayer of the morning thanksgiving is offered for being brought “to this hour” (Prague, Or. Inst. MS I p. 2.5–6: $[\overline{\lambda\kappa}]\overline{\eta\tau\epsilon\nu}\ \overline{\epsilon\pi\rho\alpha\iota}\ \overline{\epsilon\tau\epsilon\gamma\eta\nu\omicron\gamma}\ [\text{Ha}\acute{\zeta}\mu\kappa\omicron\nu\acute{\alpha},\ \text{“Miscellaneous Coptic Prayers”},\ 327])$, and then God is asked to safeguard the congregation for “this holy day” of the service. The missing text at the end might be something along the line “you gave us”, e.g. $\overline{\eta\tau\alpha\kappa\tau}\ \overline{\eta\alpha\nu}$?

7 $\overline{\delta\alpha\kappa\chi\iota}\ \overline{\mu\omicron\epsilon\iota\tau}\ [\overline{\zeta\eta\tau\eta\nu}\ \overline{\epsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma}]$? Cf. $\delta\eta\gamma\alpha\gamma\epsilon\varsigma\ \eta\mu\acute{\alpha}\varsigma\ \mu\acute{\epsilon}\chi\rho\iota\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \acute{\omicron}\rho\alpha\varsigma\ \tau\alpha\nu\tau\eta\varsigma$ in the Greek of the first prayer of the morning (Macomber, “The Greek Text of the Coptic Mass”, 315), but the verb is translated to Coptic as $\overline{\delta\alpha\kappa\eta\tau\epsilon\nu}\ \overline{\epsilon\pi\rho\alpha\iota}$ in Prague, Or. Inst. MS I p. 2.5–6.

10 $\overline{\pi\epsilon\nu\tau\alpha\kappa\tau\alpha\mu\iota\omicron}\ \overline{\mu}[\overline{\eta\tau\eta\rho\chi}\ \overline{\zeta\eta}\ \overline{\omicron\gamma\mu\eta\tau\rho\mu}]\overline{\eta}\overline{\mu\alpha\omicron}\ \overline{\mu\pi\epsilon\kappa\tau\epsilon\eta\omicron\varsigma}$: From thanksgiving for salvation and preservation the prayer goes over to a thanksgiving for creation. $[\overline{\zeta\eta}\ \overline{\omicron\gamma\mu\eta\tau\rho\mu}]\overline{\eta}\overline{\mu\alpha\omicron}$ can also be reconstructed as $\overline{\zeta\eta}\ \overline{\tau\epsilon\kappa\mu\eta\tau\rho\mu\mu\alpha\omicron}$, but the parallel of Titus 3:6 $\overline{\eta}\overline{\mu\alpha\iota}\ \overline{\epsilon\eta\tau\alpha\chi\eta\alpha\varsigma\tau\eta}\ \overline{\epsilon\pi\rho\alpha\iota}\ \overline{\epsilon\chi\omega\nu}\ \overline{\zeta\eta}\ \overline{\omicron\gamma\mu\eta\tau\rho\mu\mu\alpha\omicron}$ “(the Holy Spirit) whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour” (Horner, *The Coptic Version*

Vol. V, 546) supports the reconstruction with OY . The expression nekrenoc for humankind finds a parallel in Acts 17:29 $\text{eanon pegenoc de mpenoyte}$ “being the offspring of God” (G.W. Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Southern Dialect. Vol. VI. The Acts of the Apostles* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922], 414).

11–15 The parallel constructions do not lack a certain rhetorical quality. Remarkable is the word kósmos in the classical meaning ‘adornment, beauty’, which is rare in patristic authors (*A Patristic Greek Lexicon* [ed. G.W.H. Lampe; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962], 771a), although it appears a few times in the Septuagint (Sir. 6:30, 21:21 or Isa. 3:19), where the Sahidic translation keeps the word (see Paul Laguarde, *Aegyptiaca* [Göttingen: Dietrich, 1883], 116 and 142; Agostino Ciasca, *Sacrorum Bibliorum Fragmenta Copto-Sahidica, Vol. II* [Romae: Typis S. Congregationis, 1889], 221). The expression “beauty of your creatures” finds a parallel in Wis. 13:5 $\text{ek gar megéthous kai kalloghēs ktismátōn}$, although its translation into Sahidic is $\text{panai ntmntnos mpwnt}$ (Herbert Thompson, *The Coptic (Sahidic) version of certain Books of the Old Testament: from a papyrus in the British Museum* [London: Oxford University Press, 1908], 100). The expression $\text{tázis tōn poiēmátōn}$, of which oytaxis nnektamio is likely to be a translation, is an expression used exclusively by Cyril of Alexandria (*glaph. pent.* [PG LXIX 429 l. 31–32] and *hom. pasch.* 12, 2.66 [SC 434, p. 46]). The parallel of the construction in the second two clauses may indicate that nekpetnan[oyq] served in the original also as an adjective (“the order of your good things”) and was mistranslated in the Coptic version.

15–16 The repetition of tneyxarictēi nak either indicates that something was dropped, or it was meant as highly rhetorical.

17–19 The objects of thanksgiving, the day, the sun, and the light imply the morning as the time of the prayer. Where the two fragments join in l. 18, fragment B seems to have been mutilated already when the ostrakon was written, and a bit of space was jumped over right under the H of the previous line. After $\text{n}^{\wedge}$ in l. 19 a space equalling two or three letters was left empty, as the scribe reached the bottom of the front and did not wish to split the new word.

20 There seems to be traces of ink on the broken upper edge of the back. This might belong either to a letter or potentially a cross or a staurogram.

25–27 Due to the loss of the text the meaning remains uncertain. **ⲛⲁϥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ** might mean ‘to see’ as opposed to ‘being blind’, but this does not fit well with **ⲫⲣⲁⲓ**. Since there is little missing at the end of l. 25, the next expression might be a direct object of **ⲛⲓⲛⲁϥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ**. The expression **οἰκονομία τῆς κοσμοποιίας σου** finds no parallel in the patristic corpus. The translator decided to leave the Greek words in place either because he expected his audience to know or figure out the meaning of the words, or because he was struggling to find a good equivalent in Coptic. The connection to the word **ⲩⲡⲛⲏⲣⲉ** in the next sentence is unclear, perhaps something along the way ‘in a wonder, wondering’, e.g. **[ⲉⲛⲣ] | ⲩⲡⲛⲏⲣⲉ? [ⲛⲁ ⲟϥ]ⲩⲡⲛⲏⲣⲉ?**

29–30 Cf. Col. 1:16: $\chi\epsilon\ \pi\rho\alpha\iota\ \bar{n}\bar{z}\eta\tau\acute{\epsilon}\ \bar{n}\bar{\tau}\alpha\gamma\omega\bar{n}\bar{\tau}\ \bar{m}\bar{\pi}\tau\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\rho}\acute{\epsilon}\ \bar{n}\bar{\epsilon}\tau\bar{\epsilon}\bar{n}\ \bar{m}\bar{\pi}\eta\chi\epsilon$
 $\delta\gamma\omega\ \bar{n}\bar{\epsilon}\tau\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\iota}\chi\bar{m}\ \bar{\pi}\kappa\alpha\bar{2},\ \bar{n}\bar{\epsilon}\tau\bar{n}\bar{n}\alpha\gamma\ \bar{\epsilon}\rho\theta\theta\acute{\upsilon}\ \bar{m}\bar{n}\ \bar{n}\bar{\epsilon}\tau\bar{\epsilon}\bar{n}\bar{\tau}\bar{n}\bar{n}\alpha\gamma\ \bar{\epsilon}\rho\theta\theta\acute{\upsilon}\ \delta\bar{n}$ “for
in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and
invisible” (Horner, *The Coptic Version Vol. V*, 324), which is quoted also
in the Nicene and the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed. The verb of the
scriptural quotation is turned into a noun. The connection to the previous
clause remains unresolved.

30–35 The request for protection from various evils is also the central element of the first prayer of the morning, but the vocabulary is only marginally overlapping. In the first prayer of the morning the verbs $\alpha\pi\epsilon\alpha$ and $\kappa\epsilon\pi\alpha\alpha$ figure in the thanksgiving part. $\kappa\epsilon\pi\alpha\alpha$ is the first verb in both the Bohairic (Bute, *The Coptic Morning Service*, 3–4) and the Sahidic (Prague, Or. Inst. MS I p. 1.6 and p. 2.3, Hažmuková, “Miscellaneous Coptic Prayers”, 325–326) translations, whereas $\alpha\pi\epsilon\alpha$ is used only in the Bohairic to translate the Greek φυλάσσω, the Sahidic applies $\rho\omicron\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ (Prague, Or. Inst. MS I p. 1.7 and p. 2.4). The first prayer of the morning also lists evils that are requested to be taken away from the congregation rather than averted, but they have no overlap with this list.

33 $\overline{\text{np}}\overline{\text{p}}|\overline{\text{ck}}\overline{\text{an}}\overline{\text{d}}\overline{\text{al}}\overline{\text{on}}$ NIM: The request to protect from those who cause one to stumble may be related to Jesus’ strict admonitions against such things and people, including his saying to gouge out the eye and cut off the hand which causes one to stumble (Matt. 5:29–30, 18:8–9, Mk. 9:43, 47), and his warning against those who cause the faithful to stumble (Matt. 18:6–7, Mk. 9:42, Lk. 17:2).

34 $\text{j}2\epsilon$: Due to the lack of parallels the word cannot be reconstructed with certainty, but possibilities can be advanced. The most obvious is 2ϵ ‘destruction, fall’. The probable amount of letters lost at the left margin speaks against this solution, but since ostraca have uneven edges, it cannot be excluded. Other possible solutions include $\omicron\gamma\iota 2\epsilon$ ‘cruelty’, $\kappa\lambda 2\epsilon$ ‘blow’, or on the more earthly level $\omicron\gamma\omicron 2\epsilon$ ‘scorpion’.

34–35 $\text{n}\alpha\gamma[\alpha|\text{r}]\alpha$: The letters at the end of l. 34 and the α in l. 35 are rather certain, which suggests the Greek word $\nu\alpha\nu\alpha\gamma\acute{\iota}\alpha$ “shipwreck”. $\nu\alpha\nu\alpha\gamma\acute{\iota}\alpha$ is a rare classical expressions, but it fits in the series of misfortunes and plagues that the congregation should be freed from and it figures in various church fathers, including Cyril of Alexandria (*dogm.* [ed. Pusey, *Vol. III*] p. 563 l. 13), where it can have a spiritual meaning as well, e.g. $\tau\eta\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\pi\iota\ \tau\eta\ \pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota\ \nu\alpha\nu\alpha\gamma\acute{\iota}\alpha\nu$ in the citation from Cyril. The word probably has a spiritual rather than concrete meaning here as well. As the word is rather infrequent, the translator may have left it in Greek because he ignored the meaning.

36–37 $\overline{\text{n}}\overline{\text{f}}\overline{\text{co}}\overline{\text{y}}\overline{\text{t}}\overline{\text{w}}\overline{\text{n}}$ $\overline{\text{n}}\overline{\text{n}}[\overline{\text{z}}\overline{\text{h}}\overline{\text{t}}\ |\ \overline{\text{n}}]\overline{\text{d}}\overline{\text{n}}$: Cf. 2 Thess. 3:5 $\pi\chi\omicron\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \Delta\epsilon\ \epsilon\chi\epsilon\sigma\omicron\omicron\gamma\tau\eta\ \overline{\text{n}}\overline{\text{n}}\epsilon\tau\overline{\text{n}}\overline{\text{z}}\overline{\text{h}}\overline{\text{t}}\ \epsilon\overline{\text{z}}\overline{\text{o}}\overline{\text{y}}\overline{\text{n}}\ \epsilon\tau\alpha\overline{\text{g}}\overline{\text{a}}\overline{\text{p}}\overline{\text{n}}$ “May the Lord direct your hearts into God’s love and Christ’s perseverance” (Horner, *The Coptic Version Vol. V*,

426). Instead of resorting to the possessive article, the translator chose the dative, perhaps inspired by a dative ἡμῖν in the Greek original.

37–38 ⲉⲧⲣⲉⲛⲟϥⲱⲩ ⲉⲣⲛⲱⲃ ⲛⲁⲕ ⲧⲏⲣⲟϥ: ⲛⲁⲕ is faded and its position between ⲉⲣⲛⲱⲃ and ⲧⲏⲣⲟϥ is irregular, but it can be read with some certainty.

39–41 Requests for help to do God’s will are not particularly frequent in liturgical prayers. Besides O.CrumST 17, a blessing from Western Thebes which asks God to “give us the means that we do his will” (ll. 10–11), a private prayer from the Monastery of Epiphanius, P.Mon. Epiph. 44 can be cited as a rather close parallel: ⲛⲛⲉⲕⲧⲟⲩⲙ | ⲉⲓ ⲛⲧⲁⲣ ⲛⲉⲕⲟϥⲱⲩⲏ ⲛⲛⲉⲛⲟϥⲧⲏⲣⲟϥ [...] “give me power to do your will, all the days (of my life)” (ll. 10–15).