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**CHRISTIANITY IN EGYPT:  
LITERARY PRODUCTION AND INTELLECTUAL TRENDS  
STUDIES IN HONOR OF TITO ORLANDI**

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AN UNKNOWN «APOCRYPHAL» TEXT  
FROM THE WHITE MONASTERY

Arguably the most important scholarly achievement of Tito Orlandi is the *Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari* project. Started early in his career at the Papyrological Institute of the Catholic University Sacro Cuore in Milan<sup>1</sup>, the CMCL is destined to become known world-wide once our esteemed mentor and colleague will transfer it to the Università “La Sapienza” in Rome<sup>2</sup>. The main purpose of this project is the reconstruction of the Sahidic codices that once belonged to the White Monastery, situated in Upper Egypt, near present-day Sohag. During the past four decades, Professor Orlandi has classified and studied the White Monastery parchment codices, whose poor remnants are scattered today all over the world. This enterprise has brought him in the select company of such coptologists as Oscar von Lemm, Walter Ewing Crum, Louis-Théophile Lefort, Gérard Garitte, Arnold van Lantschoot, Paul Devos, Enzo Lucchesi and Stephen Emmel.

In this situation, we have considered that it would be fitting to honour him in this *Festschrift* with a contribution related to the library of the White Monastery. We here publish two leaves of a parchment codex that once belonged to this Coptic convent, containing a hitherto unknown dialogue between Jesus and his disciples. The first leaf is now owned by the Norwegian collector Martin Schøyen and holds the number 1991 in the Schøyen manuscript catalogue<sup>3</sup>. The second leaf exists in the Bibliothèque

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<sup>1</sup> T. Orlandi, *Un projet milanais concernant les manuscrits coptes du Monastère Blanc*, in *Le Muséon* 85 (1972), 403–413.

<sup>2</sup> On the development of the project, see esp. the CMCL bulletins issued by T. Orlandi: 1 (1978), 2 (1980), 4 (1981), 5 (1985) and idem, *Realizzazioni e progetti del Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari*, in *Atti del XVII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia (Napoli, 19-26 maggio 1983)*, ed. M. Gigante, Centro Internazionale per lo Studio dei Papiri Ercolanesi, Naples 1984, 755-761.

<sup>3</sup> This leaf was seen by the late Hans-Martin Schenke, who made a translation of the text as an *Anhang* to the translation of the *Unbekanntes Berliner Evangelium* (also known as the *Gospel of the Saviour*) which he prepared for a new edition of Hennecke-Schneemelcher's *New Testament Apocrypha* (which has not yet appeared). We are thankful to Uwe-Karsten Plisch for having made available to us Schenke's unpublished translation and brief introduction to the text, both of which have been helpful, even if we are unable to share Schenke's sentiment about the

Nationale as BN Copte 131<sup>7</sup>, fol. 29<sup>4</sup>. The connection between the two folios was made in October 2008 by Alin Suciu, who realised that they are consecutive leaves from the same codex giving a continuous text. On the second leaf the page numbers 13–14 have been preserved; the first leaf, whose upper part has been lost, must therefore be pages 11–12 of the codex. No further folios of this codex have been preserved, as far as we know.

The text is arranged on two columns and is written in a very neat and elegant hand. Whereas the bimodular script<sup>5</sup> and the peculiar superlineation system<sup>6</sup> bring the fragments close to the Fayyumic manuscripts copied in the Touton scriptorium<sup>7</sup>, they exhibit fewer of the decorative mannerisms characteristic of the Toutonian scribes. Noteworthy in this

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Schøyen text that, «es scheint derselbe Geist zu wehen, der das UBE so faszinierend macht».

<sup>4</sup> Brief description in E. Porcher, *Analyse des manuscrits coptes 131<sup>1-8</sup> de la Bibliothèque nationale, avec indication des textes bibliques (suite et fin)*, in *Revue d'Égyptologie* 2 (1936), 65–123, at 101.

<sup>5</sup> We employ the term “bimodular” as defined by G. Cavallo, *Grammata Alexandrina*, in *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 24 (1975), 23–54: a type of script based on the alternation of large and narrow letters. This script was previously known as “Alexandrian script” or “Coptic uncial,” cf. also J. Irigoin, *L'onciale grecque de type copte*, in *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft* 8 (1959), 29–51.

<sup>6</sup> On this scribal practice, which resembles the Bohairic *djinkim*, see W.H. Worrell, *Bohairic versus Sahidic Pointing*, in *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 4 (1938), 91–95; H.J. Polotsky, *Une question d'orthographe bohairique*, *ibid.* 12 (1946–1947), 25–35; H. Quecke, *Untersuchungen zum koptischen Stundengebet* [Publications de l'Institut Orientaliste de Louvain 3], Louvain 1970, 359 ff.; U. Zanetti, *Le roman de Bakhéos sur les trois jeunes saints de Babylone. Fragments coptes sahidiques*, in *Philomathestatos: Studies in Greek and Byzantine Texts Presented to Jacques Noret for his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, eds. B. Janssens et al. [Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 137], Louvain 2004, 713–747, at 724–725.

<sup>7</sup> ⲧⲟϥⲧⲟⲛ was in the Coptic period the name of ancient Tebtunis in the Fayyum; cf. É. Amélineau, *La géographie de l'Égypte à l'époque copte*, Paris 1893, 527–529, without identifying it however with Tebtunis; S. Timm, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten in arabischer Zeit* vol. 6 [Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients, Beihefte 41/6], Wiesbaden 1992, 2887–2892. On the manuscripts copied in Touton, see L. Depuydt, *Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library*, vol. 1 [Corpus of Illuminated Manuscripts 4], Louvain 1993, cx, cxii–cxvi; and most recently Ch. Nakano, *Indices d'une chronologie relative des manuscrits coptes copiés à Toutôn (Fayoum)*, in *Journal of Coptic Studies* 8 (2006), 147–159.

regard is the absence of the budded *diple*, which constitutes a distinctive mark of the codices from Touton<sup>8</sup>.

Although no further fragments are presently known to have survived from the codex to which the Schøyen and Paris leaves once belonged, several now dismembered White Monastery codices may be identified as being the work of the same copyist. The fact that two of those codices still bear the dates of their completion, offers excellent evidence for determining the date of the present fragments. Since the criteria that are used in order to establish the age of the White Monastery manuscripts are usually rather vague, the possibility of dating a fragmentary and undated manuscript through the intermediary of other codices copied by the same scribe is certainly fortunate.

One codex which appears to be in the same scribe's hand is today housed in the British Library under the call number BL Or. 1320, and contains the *Canons of the Apostles*, followed by the *Canons of the Church*<sup>9</sup>. The two colophons which occur on foll. 40<sup>r</sup> and 51<sup>r</sup> are both of much interest because the first offers the name of the scribe, Zacharias, and the second gives the year in which he completed the transcription, i.e. the Era of the Martyrs 722, which corresponds to 1005–1006 in our calendar<sup>10</sup>.

The hand of Zacharias is also recognizable on a parchment folio preserved in the *Papyrussammlung* of the National Library in Vienna as K 9436<sup>11</sup>. Tito Orlandi and Enzo Lucchesi have shown<sup>12</sup> that this and six other

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Th. Petersen, *The Paragraph Mark in Coptic Illuminated Ornament*, in *Studies in Art in Literature for Belle da Costa Greene*, ed. D. Miner, Princeton 1954, passim; N.S.H. Jansma, *Ornements des manuscrits coptes du Monastère Blanc* [Scripta Archaeologica Groningana 5], Groningen 1973, 20–25; P. Micoli, *Dodici codici della Collezione Morgan: Saggio di Codicologia e Paleografia copta* (unpublished doctoral thesis), Rome 1981, 170.

<sup>9</sup> Edited in P. de Lagarde, *Aegyptiaca*, Göttingen 1883, 209–291; description in W.E. Crum, *Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts in the British Museum*, London 1905, 52–53 (= no. 162). The text printed in de Lagarde's edition has been translated into English by G. Horner, *The Statutes of the Apostles or Canones Ecclesiastici*, London 1904, 295–363.

<sup>10</sup> W.E. Crum, *loc. cit.*; Arn. van Lantschoot, *Recueil des colophons des manuscrits chrétiens d'Égypte* [Bibliothèque du Muséon 1], Louvain 1929, 103–106 (= no. LXII). Facsimile in H. Hyvernat, *Album de paléographie copte*, Paris 1888, pl. IX/2.

<sup>11</sup> C. Wessely, *Griechische und koptische Texte theologischen Inhalts IV* [Studien zur Palaeographie und Papyruskunde 15], Leipzig 1914, 119–120 (= no. 238a-b). Photographical reproductions in *Neue Texte und Dokumentation zum Koptisch-Unterricht*, ed. M. Hasitzka [MPER XVIII], Vienna 1990, pl. 78; *Spätantike Bibliotheken: Leben und Lesen in den frühen Klöstern Ägyptens*, eds. H. Froschauer and C. Römer [Nilus 14], Vienna 2008, 111. The connection between this manuscript and the codex containing the Canons was already made by van Lantschoot, *Recueil*, 104, and E.

consecutive leaves which are in the John Rylands Library in Manchester<sup>13</sup>, are all that has survived from a slender codex containing the Sahidic version of the so-called *Historia Gesii et Isidori* (BHO 485–486; *Clavis Coptica* 0202), the story of the two brothers who discovered near Emesa the relics of John the Baptist<sup>14</sup>. A *subscriptio* placed under the last line on the recto of Vienna K 9436, which is paged 31 and was the last but one page of the codex, mentions that the manuscript has been written in the year 723 Era of the Martyrs, i.e. 1006–1007 A.D.<sup>15</sup>.

On the basis of these two codices, copied at a short distance in time one after another, we can conclude that, being the work of the same scribe, the manuscript to which belonged the Schøyen and Paris fragments should be ascribed to the same period<sup>16</sup>.

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Lucchesi, *Un feuillet reconnu de l'Histoire de Gesius et Isidorus relative à l'invention du chef de Saint Jean-Baptiste (BHO 485–486)*, in *Deuxième journée d'Études coptes (Strasbourg 26 mai 1984)* [Cahiers de la bibliothèque copte 3], Louvain 1986, 15–19, at 17.

<sup>12</sup> See the microfiche attached to T. Orlandi, *L'inventario dei manoscritti copti letterari della Papyrussammlung di Vienna*, in *Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer (P. Rain. Cent.): Festschrift zum 100-jährigen Bestehen der Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, Vienna 1983, 90–93; Lucchesi, *Un feuillet*, 16–17.

<sup>13</sup> Description in W.E. Crum, *Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts in the Collection of the John Rylands Library, Manchester*, Manchester 1909, 50 (= no. 97).

<sup>14</sup> The text was edited on the basis of three fragmentary codices known at that time by G. Steindorff, *Gesios und Isidoros: Drei sahidische Fragmente über die 'Auffindung der Gebeine Johannes des Täufers'*, in *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache* 21 (1883), 137–158. To the manuscripts used by Steindorff, J. Leipoldt, *Koptische Urkunden I* [Ägyptische Urkunden aus den königlichen Museen zu Berlin], Berlin 1904, 184–185 (=no. 188) added a fragment in Berlin (*P. Berol.* 8776), which belongs to a fourth codex of the *Historia Gesii et Isidori*. To the same codex from which comes the Berlin fragment, we can now add a previously unidentified one, namely IFAO no. 163. The piece is acephalous in all the four known codices, but Crum, *Rylands*, 50 and, not without some hesitation, Lucchesi, *Un feuillet*, 17, attributed it either to Ps.-Alexander of Alexandria or to Ps.-Athanasius; for the attribution to Ps.-Athanasius, cf. also E. Lucchesi, *Trois éloges coptes de Jean-Baptiste attribués à Athanase, Théophile et Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, in *Vigiliae Christianae* 53 (1999), 323–324, at 324. However, Father Ugo Zanetti has shown that the story is equally attested in Arabic, being ascribed to a certain Christodulos, bishop of Tiphre in Lower Egypt, see U. Zanetti, *Gésius et Isidore (BHO 485–486) dans une homélie arabe*, in *Analecta Bollandiana* 106 (1988), 318; idem, *L'homélie arabe sur Gésius et Isidore (cf. BHO 485)*, in *Analecta Bollandiana* 109 (1991), 5–71, 362.

<sup>15</sup> Van Lantschoot, *Recueil*, 106–107 (= no. LXIII).

<sup>16</sup> It is perhaps useful to mention here the rest of the identified fragments transcribed by this copyist: Vatican Borgia 109, 149 (*Theodori Anatolii Miracula*); Vatican Borgia 109, 156 (*Historia de Septem Dormientibus*); the fragments quoted *infra*, note 23 (Ps.-Severian of Gabala, *In apostolos*); Leiden Rijksmuseum no. 95 (=Insin-

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Though the text contained on these four pages has the form of a dialogue between Jesus and his disciples – or possibly a single, unnamed disciple – it corresponds to no presently known “apocryphal” text. The catalogue of the Schøyen manuscript collection assigns it to the so-called *Gospel of Bartholomew*, even if Bartholomew’s name does not appear on the two extant leaves, nor does the text itself bear much resemblance to the existing apocrypha associated with that disciple – either the *Questions of Bartholomew* (BHG 228; CANT 63) or the *Coptic Book of the Resurrection* (CANT 80; Clavis Coptica 0027)<sup>17</sup>. On the other hand, similar revelation dialogues between Christ and one or more disciples can be found in certain Coptic homilies attributed pseudonymously to Euodius of Rome<sup>18</sup>, Cyril of Jerusalem<sup>19</sup>, John Chrysostom<sup>20</sup> and to other Fathers of the

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ger no. 50) (unidentified). Doubtful: Clarendon Press b.4, fr. 42 and BN Copte 131<sup>5</sup>, fol. 76 (Ps.-Cyril of Jerusalem, *In 24 Seniores*); Vienna K 9284 (unidentified).

<sup>17</sup> For the *Book of the Resurrection*, which continues to receive attention by scholars, we limit ourselves to mention the editions of E.A.Th. Wallis Budge, *Coptic Apocrypha in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*, London 1913, 1–48 (Coptic text), 179–230 (English translation); J.-D. Kaestli and P. Cherix, *L'Évangile de Barthélemy d'après deux écrits apocryphes* [Apocryphes], Turnhout 1993; M. Westerhoff, *Auferstehung und Jenseits im koptischen “Buch der Auferstehung Jesu Christi, unseres Herrn”* [Orientalia Biblica et Christiana 11], Wiesbaden 1999. For an update on the current state of research on the *Book of Bartholomew*, two manuscripts of which were also found in the White Monastery (codices MONB.EZ and MONB.FP), see now I. Gardner and J. Johnston, *The Passover Litany of the Liber Bartholomaei: Edition of Bibliothèque Nationale Copte 132<sup>1</sup> f. 40*, in *Journal of Coptic Studies* 11 (2009), 61-70; *idem*, *The Liber Bartholomaei on the Ascension: Edition of Bibliothèque Nationale Copte 132<sup>1</sup> f. 37*, in *Vigiliae Christianae* 64 (2010), 74–86.

<sup>18</sup> According to Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* III, 22), Euodius was the first successor of Peter to the bishopric of Antioch. For the Copts he belonged to the restricted group of Jesus’ disciples, and this privilege transformed him into an eye-witness of the apostolic times and the keeper of certain words and deeds of the Saviour and of his disciples, unrecorded otherwise, but filled with the expression of Coptic piety. Only Coptic literature transformed Euodius into an author, ascribing to him two or three homilies; see esp. T. Orlandi, in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* vol. 4, ed. A. S. Atiya, New York 1991, 1078–1079, s.v. *Evodius of Rome*. A Coptic homily (CANT 81; Clavis Coptica 0149), presumably by Ps.-Euodius, was considered for a long time to be an apocryphal gospel, but this hypothesis has now been dismissed; see E. Lucchesi, *Un évangile apocryphe imaginaire*, in *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 28 (1997), 167–178, and the literature quoted therein.

<sup>19</sup> Concerning the Coptic homilies with apocryphal insertions attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem, see in general T. Orlandi, *Cirillo di Gerusalemme nella letteratura copta*,



Egyptian Church. However, the identity of the present text remains a small mystery.

The dialogue takes place after the crucifixion (see especially 13:38–39). The victorious Christ encourages his disciples to believe that they, too, will be able to conquer. Two themes in particular are highlighted: first, that the incarnated and suffering Christ was fully human as well as divine; and secondly, that the disciples are able to share in him and his power because he is their “head,” “root,” “leaven,” etc., and because they are the recipients of his grace. Some inventive developments of the metaphors describing the relationship between Jesus and his disciples are notable, in particular the Pauline metaphor of the head and the limbs, which inspires the author to display a certain amount of scientific medical knowledge. The style in general is reminiscent of the Farewell Discourses of the Fourth Gospel. Remarkably, the preserved text consists only of lines spoken in the first person and contains no narrative components. We are not told who the speakers are. Jesus, who is not named, speaks about himself consistently as “I,” and addresses his interlocutors as “you” (plural). They on their part refer to themselves as “we.”

On one occasion, however, Jesus seems to use the second person singular: “You have seen...” (ἀκναγ) (14:51). This suggests that Christ may here be addressing one disciple in particular. Due to the fragmentary state of the text at this point, however, no inferences can be safely made in this regard. It cannot be totally excluded that Jesus is all along conversing with a single disciple, who is speaking on behalf of the disciples as a collective, and is being addressed as their representative.

Another possibility, however, is that the dialogue was actually framed by a sermon and that the homilist himself intervened at this point, enhancing the vivacity of his discourse by involving the listener directly. This was a common stylistic device in Christian homiletics influenced by the Second

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in *Vetera Christianorum* 9 (1972), 93–100, at 96–100. Two sermons on the Passion (*De Vita et Passione Christi* [CPG 3604; Clavis Coptica 0113]; *De Passione 1* [CPG 3598; Clavis Coptica 0114]) are among the most interesting pieces in this regard, both unpublished but attested in several codices, including some from the White Monastery. More than once, parts of these fragmentary manuscripts have been published individually as apocryphal writings, their real identity being revealed only later; cf. in this sense e.g. E. Lucchesi, *Identification de P. Vindob. K 2644*, in *Orientalia* 76 (2007), 174–175; idem, *D'une vie de Marie à une homélie sur la Passion*, in *Analecta Bollandiana* 114 (1996), 269–272.

<sup>20</sup> Several Coptic homilies by Ps.-Chrysostom recount “apocryphal” episodes and revelation dialogues between Jesus and his apostles: *On the Four Bodiless Beasts* (CPG 5150.9; Clavis Coptica 0177), *On John the Baptist* (CPG 5150.3; Clavis Coptica 0170) and *On the Resurrection* (CPG 5150.11; Clavis Coptica 0167).

Sophistic<sup>21</sup>, and numerous examples from the Coptic sermons may be quoted. Even though normally the preacher would appeal to his audience after a peroration using the expression ΔΤΕΤΝΝΑΥ, he could also use the second person singular. For example, in the *Homily on the Thief and the Cross* (CPG 2622; Clavis Coptica 0395) by Ps.-Theophilus of Alexandria, the author concludes his argument concerning the goodness of God with the words «you have seen (ΔΚΝΑΥ) now the great compassion of the Father and of his Son towards us...»<sup>22</sup>. Likewise, in the Pseudo-Chrysostomic *Encomium on the Four Bodiless Beasts*, the preacher comments on the meaning of a certain scriptural passage by saying, “you have seen (ΔΚΝΑΥ) that at the end of the quote...”<sup>23</sup>; and, after reporting a discourse made by Jesus to his disciples, the *Encomium on the Twelve Apostles* (CPG 4281; Clavis Coptica 0331), attributed to Severian of Gabala, remarks: “You have seen (ΔΚΝΑΥ) a teacher who knows how to teach his students...”<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> John Chrysostom, who made use of the Second Sophistic’s rhetoric, also employed the verb εἶδον in this way; see e.g. the numerous occurrences from *Homilia 4 ad illuminandos* (CPG 4468), 8,1: εἶδες εὐγνωμοσύνην; 10,1: εἶδες αὐτὸν καθάπερ λέοντα μεμηνότα; 10,9: εἶδες, ἀγαπητέ, ὅση ἡ μεταβολή. Cf. Th.E. Ameringer, *The Stylistic Influence of the Second Sophistic on the Panegyric Sermons of St. John Chrysostom*, Washington 1921. Tito Orlandi was the first who pointed out that the Second Sophistic’s figures of speech occur often in the Coptic homilies, see T. Orlandi, *Omèlie copte* [Corona Patrum], Turin 1981, 24.

<sup>22</sup> Quotation taken from the unpublished MS Pierpont Morgan M 595, fol. 144<sup>r</sup>. This work is preserved in four manuscripts, two of which come from the White Monastery. The only edition, made after a papyrus codex in the Egyptian Museum in Turin, was made by F. Rossi, *Trascrizione di un codice Copto del Museo Egizio di Torino*, in *Memorie della Reale Accademia delle Scienze di Torino* 2<sup>nd</sup> ser., 35 (1883), 64–83 (Coptic text), 84–90 (Italian translation); reprinted in idem, *I papiri copti del Museo Egizio di Torino*, vol. 1, Turin 1887. A single folio from one of the White Monastery codices, Vienna K 4856, has been published by H. Förster, *Kestēs und Dēmas, die beiden Schächer am Kreuz – aus einer koptischen Paraphrase der Acta Pilati*, in *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 11 (2008), 405–420, but without the proper identification.

<sup>23</sup> Edited and translated into English by C.S. Wansink in *Homiletica from the Pierpont Morgan Library*, ed. L. Depuydt [CSCO 524–525; Scriptorum copticorum 43–44], Louvain 1991, vol. 1, 40 (Coptic text), vol. 2, 41 (English translation). For the different Sahidic manuscripts, as well as the versions of this homily in other Oriental languages, see E. Lucchesi, *Fausse attributions en hagiographie copte*, in *Le Muséon* 113 (2006), 243–254, at 243–247.

<sup>24</sup> Quotation taken from M.E. Foat’s edition and translation in *Encomiastica from the Pierpont Morgan Library*, ed. L. Depuydt [CSCO 544–545; Scriptorum copticorum 47–48], Louvain 1993, vol. 1, 90 (Coptic text), vol. 2, 69 (English translation). This encomium survived also in Arabic, see D. Righi, *Severiano di Gabala, In apostolos: Clavis Coptica 0331 (CPG 4281)* 2 vols., Rome 2004. Cf. also S.J. Voicu, *Pseudo Severiano di Gabala, Encomium in XII apostolos (CPG 4281): Gli spunti apocrifi*, in *Apocrypha* 19

As for the date of this gospel-like text, the echoes it contains of fifth century Christological debates should warn against regarding it as an early document. It is nevertheless interesting to observe that the gospel genre and the revelation dialogue could still be used freely at a relatively late period, whether the purpose of the text was to make specific Christological dogmatic points by putting them into the mouth of Christ himself, or simply general edification. Given the incomplete state of the manuscript, however, definite conclusions regarding the literary genre of the document would be rash. Though the two extant leaves may give us the impression that we are reading a hitherto unknown “gospel,” the hypothesis that the exchange between Jesus and his disciples may have been constructed as part of a sermon or a martyrdom is not to be excluded, since it was not uncommon in the Coptic literature to introduce revelation-discourses into a homiletic framework. Father Paulino Bellet affirmed once in this regard that

La homilía copta tiene, en general, un carácter compósito; junto al desarrollo del tema que es motivo de la exposición parenética, incluye otras varias narraciones sin conexión con la material de la homilía, y ama la inclusión de tradiciones inspiradas en los apócrifos, cuando no en antiguas leyendas populares ... la homilética copta acostumbra tratar su texto con máximas libertad y añadir narraciones de fantasía del gusto de los oyentes<sup>25</sup>.

The scholar that we celebrate in this volume characterized in similar terms the apocryphal writings transmitted by the late Coptic manuscripts, drawing attention at the same time to the problem of their fragmentary character, which can be often misleading:

In realtà parlare di questi testi copti come di apocrifi è il frutto di un equivoco, generato in parte dal particolare stato frammentario in cui sono pervenuti i manoscritti copti, ed in parte dal disconoscimento dell'opera della scuola letteraria copta del VII e VIII secolo<sup>26</sup>.

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(2008), 217-266. A White Monastery codex containing the *Encomium on the Twelve Apostles* was copied by Zacharias himself; the remnants of the codex in question are: Vatican Borgia 109, 124; Paris BN Copte 161, fol. 35 and Cairo Coptic Museum, *sine numero*.

<sup>25</sup> P. Bellet, *Testimonios coptos de la aparición de Cristo resucitado a la Virgen*, in *Estudios bíblicos* 13 (1954), 199–205, at 202. See also the interesting comments on Coptic homilies by D. Brakke, *The Egyptian Afterlife of Origenism: Conflicts over Embodiment in Coptic Sermons*, in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 66 (2000), 277–293.

<sup>26</sup> T. Orlandi, *Gli Apocrifi copti*, in *Augustinianum* 23 (1983), 57–71, at 68.

In conclusion, we can only express our hope that, by publishing these two leaves of an unknown “gospel-like” text, it may become easier for scholars in the future to identify further fragments of the codex which may have been preserved, or to recognise another version of the same work, so that we may understand better what kind of text we are reading, and what its proper context may be.

## Text and translation

11

11

5

παι · ἄνων γεν  
 ρωμε · ἔθεν  
 τκ ογρωμε ἵ  
 τενζε τεννα  
 χοοc χε ἵθε ἵ  
 ταπαλχο ἵπεφ  
 σωτῆ · νεν  
 ναχο ρωων ·  
 εωχε ἵτκ ογ  
 νογτε εκχορα  
 ειτ ἔρωβ νιμ ·  
 αγω νογῶειω  
 νιμ · ἄνων ·  
 ἄνων γενρωμε  
 ἵσδωβωνα ·  
 ογ πε πεντωκ  
 ἵζητ ρῆπαι ·  
 αρηγ πεχοφ νε  
 τενζητ ρορῶ  
 ἔρωτῆ ωατε

10

15

20

25

this. We are  
 human. If you were  
 human like  
 us, we would have  
 said that just as  
 he overcame *his*  
 trials, we,  
 too, might overcome.  
 You, being  
 divine, are indeed stronger  
 than everything  
 and at all  
 times. We,  
 however, are humans  
 possessing a weak body.  
 How can we have confidence  
 in this?  
 Did he perhaps say:  
 “You are slow of heart  
 until [

(ii)

(ii)

30

35

. [ . . . . . ]  
 ΤΗΝ [ . . . . . ] .  
 ἘΝΟΥΜΝ[ΤΝΟΥ]  
 ΤΕ ΕΣΚΗΚ ΔΡΗΥ ·  
 ΕΙΤΕ ΕΥΛΟΓΟΣ Ε  
 ΤΕΤ̄Ν̄Ο ΝΑΤСО  
 ΟΥΝ · ΕΩΔΕ  
 ΝΤΑΙΩΕΡΙΣΕ  
 ΔΕ ΟΝ ἘΝΤСАР̄Ξ  
 Ε̄СО ΝΟΥΕΙΕ ΝΟΥ  
 ΟΥΤ Μ̄ΝΤΜ̄ΝΤ  
 ΝΟΥΤΕ ΕΥΥΧΗ  
 ΝΛΟΓΙΚΗ · ΔΥΩ  
 ΝΝΟΗΡΟΝ · ΔΥΩ  
 ΕΩΔΕ ΝΤΑΙΔΡΟ  
 ἘΝΟΥΜΝ̄ΤΝΟΥ  
 ΤΕ ΝΤΑΙΡ̄ ΡΩΜΕ ·  
 ΕΙΕ Δ̄ΡΡΩΤ̄Ν ΤΕ  
 Τ̄ΝΔΙCΤΑΖΕ ΝΑΤ

40

45

50

[ . . . . . ]  
 [ . . . . . ]  
 by means of  
 unveiled [divinity],  
 or a word, because  
 you are ignorant.  
 Even though  
 the flesh in  
 which I suffered,  
 was wholly  
 united with  
 divinity into  
 a rational and  
 intelligent soul, and  
 though I conquered  
 by means of divinity,  
 I was human.  
 Why do you  
 doubt, you un[

12

12

5

	]N				
[ . . . . . ]	ΜΟΥΘΕ	10	[ . . . . . ]	walk	
[MM]OC ·			[it].		
ΟΥCΜΟΤ ΓΑΡ ΠΕΝ			For I took a shape		
ΤΑΙΔΑϞ ΧΕΚΑC			in order that		
ΝΤΕΤΝΑΖΕΝΤ			you might draw close		
ΤΗΥΤ̄Ν Ε̄ΡΟΙ ·		15	to me.		
ΟΥΠ̄ΝΑ ΠΕΝΤΑΙ			I received a spirit		
ΧΙΤ̄Ϟ ΚΑΤΑ			in accordance with		
ΟΥΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙᾹ ·			a dispensation (οἰκονομία),		
Ε̄ΟΥΕΝΤΑΙϞ ΡΩ ·			and I have it also		
ΧΕ ΕΙΕΧΟΟΥϞ Ε̄		20	that I may send it		
Χ̄ΝΤΗΥΤ̄Ν ·			upon you.		
ΑΝΟΚ ΠΕ ΠΕΤ̄Ν			I am your		
ΟΥΩ̄Ω̄Μ ΤΗ			whole lump of dough.		
Ρ̄Ϟ · Δ̄ΝΟΚ			I		
ΠΕ ΠΕΤ̄ΝΘΑΒ · †		25	am your leaven. I		
ΝΑΤΡΕΠΕΤ̄ΝΟΥ			will leaven your		
Ω̄Ω̄Μ ΤΗΡ̄Ϟ ϞΙ ·			whole lump. Take		

(ii)

(ii)

30

ἄνοκ πε τνοῦ  
 νε ἰτωτῆ νε  
 νεκλατος ·  
 πμοοῦ γαρ ἔωα  
 ρετνοῦνε con  
 κῆ · ωαρενε  
 κλατος μετεχε  
 ἔροϋ ·  
 ἄνοκ πε ταπε ἰ  
 τωτῆ πε πω  
 μα · τετρο  
 φη ἔωασβωκ  
 εροῦν ἔττα  
 προ ριτῆ ταπε ·  
 ωασπωρτ ἔβολ  
 ρημέλος τη  
 ροῦ · αγω  
 τῆνομτε ετῆν  
 ἰμοῦτ · ναί ε  
 ταρχει χιν ἰ

35

40

45

50

I am the root,  
 you are  
 the branches.  
 For the water that  
 the root sucks  
 up, the  
 branches share  
 (as well).  
 I am the head,  
 you are the body.  
 The nourishment  
 that goes  
 into the  
 mouth  
 spreads by way of the head  
 throughout all the members.  
 And  
 the strength that is in  
 the sinews, which  
 begin from



13

ΠΜΕΝΙΖ Μ̄ΠΖΗ  
 β̄ς · ετ̄ρ̄μ̄παν  
 κεφαλος · φ̄ᾱς  
 ζ̄ωτ̄ε ν̄μ̄μᾱγ  
 [ρ̄]ν̄ῑμελος τη  
 [ρ̄ο]γ̄ · ᾱγ̄ω  
 [τ̄ςομ] μ̄προζηρη  
 [τικη] ἤρεσκιμ  
 [ . . . . . ] · ε̄ᾱς  
 [ . . . . . ] μ̄π̄ρη  
 [β̄ς. . . .]ρ̄  
 [ . . . . . ]  
 [ . . . ] . . [ . . . ]  
 [ . . . ] φ̄ᾱ π̄μ̄[ . . ]  
 [ . . . ]β̄ ·  
 [ . . . . ε]ν̄εργ̄ῑᾱ  
 [ . . . ] . ρ̄ητ̄ · μ̄ν̄  
 [ταχ]ᾱρισ̄ νᾱπω  
 [ρ̄ω] ε̄βολ̄ · ᾱγ̄ω  
 ν̄σ̄πωρ̄ω̄ ε̄βολ̄  
 ε̄ζ̄ωτ̄ῆ τηρ̄  
 τ̄ῆ · μη̄ μ̄  
 [π]ε̄τε̄ν̄ς̄ωτ̄ῆ  
 [χε ν]ᾱποστολος  
 [ . . . . ]τ̄ · χε̄ ρ̄ῆ  
 [π . . . . . ] · ᾱρ̄  
 [ . . . . . ] . .

13

the membrane of the cover  
 which is in the  
 brain,  
 penetrates along with them  
 all the members.  
 5 And  
 [the power] of voluntary  
 movement  
 [ . . . . . ], after it has  
 10 [ . . . . . ] the cover (?)  
 [ . . . . . ]  
 [ . . . . . ]  
 [ . . . ] as far as the [ . . ]  
 15 [ . . . ]  
 [ . . . . . ] power (ἐνέργεια)  
 [ . . . . . ] mind (?) and  
 [my] grace will be  
 shed, and  
 20 it will be shed  
 upon you all.  
 [Have you] not  
 heard  
 [that the] apostles  
 25 [ . . . . . ] that in  
 [the . . . . . ]  
 [ . . . . . ]

(ii) †COOYN MEN		(ii) Indeed I know
ΖΑΘΗ ἸΠΑΤΑ		before I
ΧΙ ΣΑΡΞ · ΧΕ ΠΕ		assumed flesh that the
ΠΝΑ ΜΝ ΡΟΟΥΤ ·		spirit is willing
ΤΣΑΡΞ ΔΕ ΟΥΑC	30	but the flesh
ΘΕΗΣ ΤΕ ·		is weak.
ΔΥΩ †COOYN ΜΝ		And I know
ΓΑΡ ἸΠΑΤΕΙ		before I
ΦΕΡΤΙCΕ · ΧΕ		suffered that
ΠΤΙCΕ ΜΟΚΞ ·	35	suffering is hard. None-
ΖΩΜΑΙΟC ΔΙΕΙ		theless I let myself be cru-
ΦΞ ΧΕ ΖΙΤῆΝ ΟΥ		cified, so that by means of
[ . . . . . ] ΜΝ		[ . . . . . ] and
[ . . . . . ]		[ . . . . . ]
ΔΥΩ [ . . . ] · ἢ ΕΙ	40	And [ . . . . . ] if I
ΦΑΝΝΑΥ ἘΡΩ		see
Τῆ ἘΑΤΕΤῆΩΠ		you having
ΤΙCΕ · †ΝΑΕΡ		suffered, I shall
ΠΜΕΕΥἘ ἸΝΕΝ		remember the things
ΤΑΙΩΟΠΟΥ ΖΩ ·	45	I had to endure myself.
†ΝΑΞ [ . ] Ξ [ . . . . ]		I shall [ . . . . . ]
ἸΝΟΥ [ . . . . ΝΑ]		a [ . . . . in]
ΞΡῆΝ ἢ [ . . . . . ]		front of [ . . . . . ]
ΧΞ [ . . . . . ]		[ . . . . . ]
ΤΑΧ[ΑΡΙC . . . . ]	50	my [grace . . . . ]
CΘ[ . . . . . ]		[ . . . . . ]
Ϟ[ . . . . . ΚΩ]		[ . . . . . ]

14	<p>           ἔτ μοκῆ ἴσω            πε ἔροϋ · εἰέ οϋ            πετναωωπε            ἕμπωε ετωοϋ            ᾠοϋ · ἔωαρε            πωαζ χιζε ἴρη            τῦ · ἕνοϋμοτνεϑ            αγω εωχε αἰ            ωπειριζε ἕντσα            ρῆ · καιπερ ᾠνῖ            οϋνοϋτε ναπα            ἑνε εριχῆ . [ . ]            πκα χ [ . . . . τη ]            ῖϥ [ . . . . . ]            η ρ̄ . [ . . . . ] ε ἴ            ναἰ ερενρωμε            ἴματε νε · καν            εωχε ταχαριϑ            ἵνμαγ · αγω            εωχε αἰεμκαζ            ἵ [ . . . α ] νοκ πε            [ . . . . ] ομ ἴ            [ . . . . ] απε τε            [ . . . . ] ἵ ἴ            [ . . . . . ] ἴρη            [ τ . . . . . ] τοἰ            [ . . . . . ] . ἵ         </p>	14	<p>           [fire] it is difficult to            seize it. What, then,            can come            from the tree that is dry            when            the fire blazes high in            it with ease?            And if I have            suffered in the flesh            even though I am            a god free of passion,            being above [ . . ]            [ . . . . . all ]            of it [ . . . . . ]            or [ . . . . . ]            these, because they            are humans only, even            though my grace            is with them. And            if I laboured            [ . . . . . ] I am            [ . . . . . ]            [ . . . . ] is [the] head            [ . . . . . ]            [ . . . . . ] in            [ . . . . . ]            [ . . . . . ]         </p>
	5		
	10		
	15		
	20		
	25		

(ii) ναὶ ἔξενωθε		(ii) these, because they are chil-
ἰρῶμε ἴματα		dren of humans only,
νε · καθ		even though
σεσποῦδαζε ἐν		they are zealous for the
ωθε ἰνοῦτ[ε]	30	children of God.
ῥῆταχαρις [δε]		[But] through my grace
αἰμεεῦ ἔρ[ωογ]		I have thought of [them],
αῦω αἰχ[ . . . . ]		and I have [ . . . . ]
νακ . [ . . . . ]		[ . . . . ]
ρατ[ . . . . . ]	35	[ . . . . ]
ρ[ . . . . . . . ]		[ . . . . ]
[ . . . . . ]		[ . . . . ]
[ . . ] ἴβον[θε . . ]		[ . . ] help
τη κατ[α . . . . ]		[ . . ] according to [ . . . . ]
τιῆντ[χ[ . . . . ]	40	the [ . . . . . . . . ]
καίος ν . [ . . . ]		[ . . . . . . . . ]
ετβε παι κα[ι ογ]		Because of that
εντητῆν ἴ[μαγ]		you [also] have
νογολιφίς ρη		tribulation in the
πκοσμος · αλ	45	world, but
λα τωκ ἰρη[τ]		take courage,
χε ἄνοκ αἰχρ[ο]		for I have overcome
ἔπκοσμος ·		the world.
ακναγ ἔ[ . . . ]		You (sg.) have seen [ . . . ]
ἴμ[ . . . . . . . ]	50	[ . . . . . . . . ]
χ[ . . . . . . . ]		[ . . . . . . . . ]
[ . . . . . . . ]		[ . . . . . . . . ]

p. 11

25–27 For the expression cf. Ps 4:3 ἕως πότε βαρυκάρδιοι (φατνιαγ νετῆρητ χορῶ ερωτῶ Budge, *Psalter* 4:2). φατε may be completed as φατε[νιογ, or with a feminine noun.

38–39 The expression γυμνή θεότης is frequent in fourth century writers (Athanasius, Didymus, Chrysostom, etc.) and later: the Son did not reveal his “unveiled divinity,” but appeared in the world as a human being.

45–49 Whereas the proposition that the flesh of the Logos was united with a rational and intelligent soul is orthodox and Chalcedonian, the formulation “united with divinity into ...” is unusual and perhaps betrays a Monophysite position.

53–54 Cf. Matt. 14:31; 28:17.

p. 12

22–27 This and the following sentences are written in a Johannine “I am”-style, though the metaphors are chiefly inspired by Paul. For these lines, cf. 1 Cor 5:6, Gal 5:9.

35–37 A variation on John 15:5 ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἄμπελος, ὑμεῖς τὰ κλήματα (cf. also Apoc 22:16).

43–13:11 The image of Christ as the ‘head’ is elaborated in a medical direction: the head provides the body with nourishment and is the source of the sinews giving the body strength and the power to move. This is based on contemporary medical theories. For a study that provides information on the relevant theories, and also attempts to apply them to the interpretation of the Pauline idea itself, see Clinton E. Arnold, *Jesus Christ: ‘Head’ of the Church (Colossians and Ephesians)*, in *Jesus of Nazareth Lord and Christ*, ed. Joel B. Green and M. Turner, Grand Rapids 1994, 346–366.

51–13:5 The theory that the sinews, or nerves (νεῦρα), have their starting point in the meninx is particularly associated with Galen; see e.g. *De Plac. Hipp. Plat.* VII, 3.4–5, 35–36.

p. 13

6–8 Cf. Ps.-Galen, *Def. Med.* XIX, 366–367 Kühn: νεῦρα τὰ ἀπ’ ἐγκεφάλου καὶ μηνίγγων ἐκπεφυκότα, κοινά, ξηρότερα καὶ ἥττον θερμότερα φλεβῶν καὶ ἀρτηριῶν αἰσθητικώτερα τὰς προαιρετικὰς κινήσεις ἐκτελοῦντα («the nerves, having been brought forth from the brain and the meninges together, and being drier and less hot than the veins and more sensitive than the arteries, accomplish voluntary movement»). The theory goes back at least to Herophilus in the third century B.C. as quoted e.g. by Rufus of Ephesus, *De corp. hum. aph.* 150: τὰ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐγκεφάλου βλαστήματα, νεῦρα αἰσθητικά, καὶ προαιρετικά, διὰ ὧν αἰσθησις καὶ προαιρετικὴ κίνησις, καὶ πᾶσα σῶματος πρᾶξις συντελεῖται («and the offshoots from the brain are the

sensory and voluntary motor nerves, through which sensation and voluntary motion and all action of the body are accomplished»; Heinrich von Staden, *Herophilus: The Art of Medicine in Early Alexandria*, Cambridge 1989, 225, and *passim*).

22–24 The reconstruction is uncertain. If the form is the negative perfect I, the djinkim above the n is erroneous.

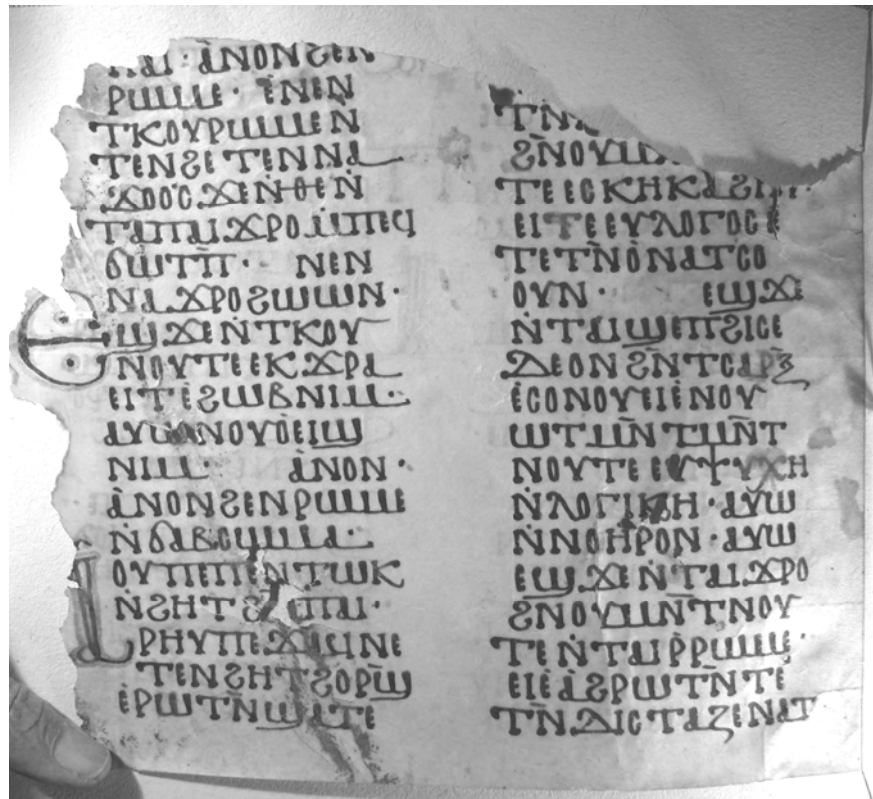
30–33 Mark 14:38; Matt 26:41. Note that this text is also quoted in the Strasbourg Coptic Gospel Fragment and in the homily by Ps.-Cyril of Jerusalem, *De Passione I* (M 595, fol. 10<sup>f</sup>).

p. 14

44–50 John 16:33. This text as well is quoted in the Strasbourg Coptic Gospel Fragment.

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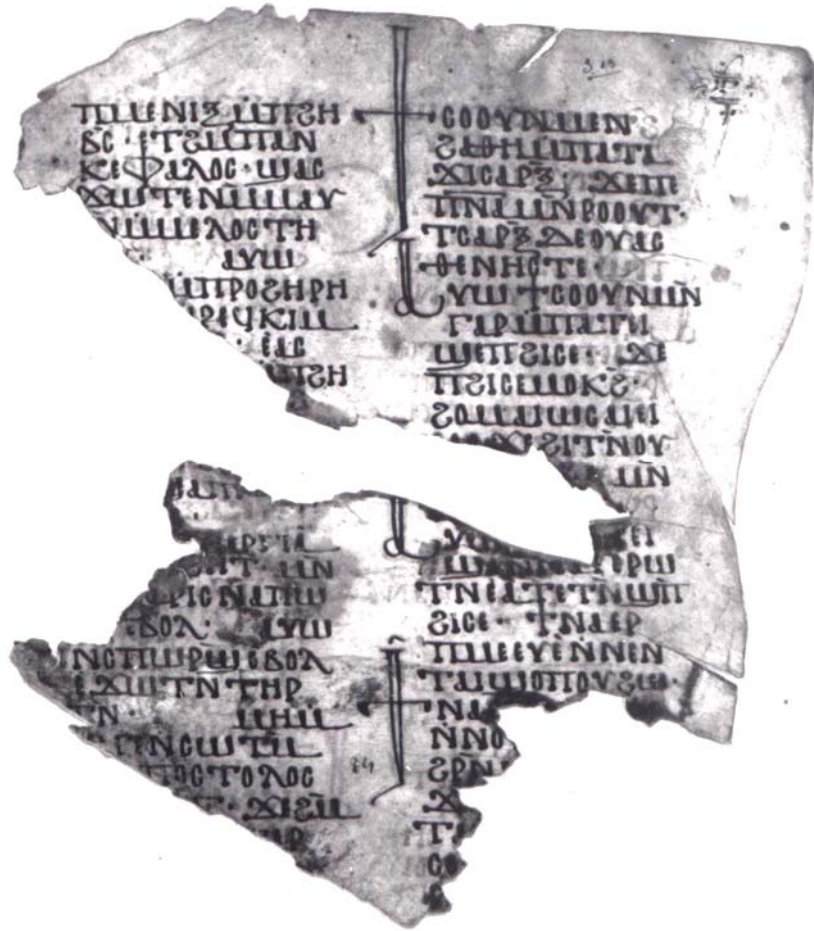


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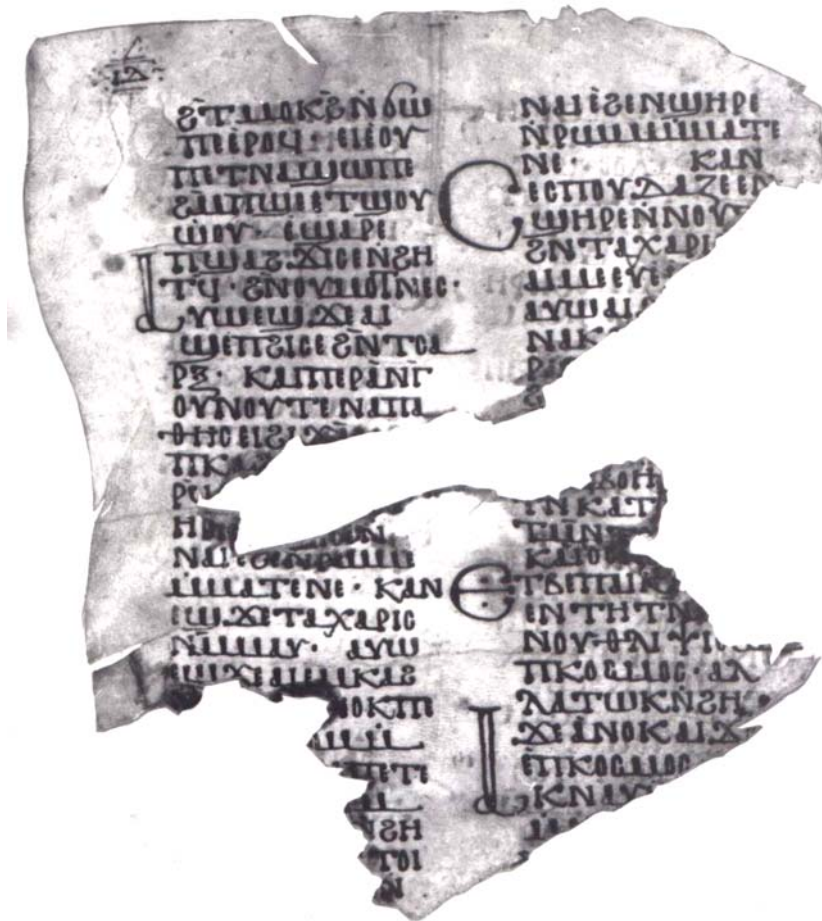


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Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, copte 131<sup>7</sup> fol. 29 r



Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, copte 131<sup>7</sup> fol. 29 v

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