

Sahidic papyrus fragments with anaphora and prayer of inclination before communion

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Abstract

This paper contains the reedition of two papyrus fragments in Sahidic Coptic, which are kept in Vienna at the Kunsthistorisches Museum as inv. K 8605h and K 8586b. I argue that they were written by the same scribe, probably belong to the same codex, and come from the seventh century from the area of Western Thebes. K 8605h contains the intercession for the deceased from an anaphora, which shows a remarkable overlap with the Sahidic redaction of the anaphora of Severus of Antioch in the ‘Great Euchologion’; I contend that the papyrus in fact preserves this anaphora. K 8586b contains the prayer of inclination after communion ὁ θεὸς οὕτως ἀγαπήσας ἡμᾶς, which is also known in one Greek, one Bohairic, two Syriac, and one Arabic redactions. In the Syriac tradition it is included in the liturgy of Severus of Antioch. In the liturgical commentary I examine the complex transmission history of this popular prayer.

1 Introduction

In December 2023, before meeting with Reinhard Meßner in Vienna, I was examining the Coptic papyri at the Kunsthistorisches Museum (*olim* Landesmuseum, Innsbruck). Thus, Prof. Meßner was the first to hear that I had identified on a papyrus fragment, inv. K 8605h, the intercessions of an anaphora, which overlap with the Sahidic redaction of the anaphora of Severus of Antioch. The papyrus furthermore joins another fragment, inv. K 8565b, which contains the Sahidic redaction of a popular prayer of inclination before communi-

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on.² These fragments thus become another piece of the puzzle of the non-Chalcedonian liturgy of Western Thebes in the seventh and eighth centuries.³ I present the reedition of these two fragments as a gift to Reinhard Meßner.

K 8605h is a tiny piece of papyrus measuring 5×5 cm; K 8586b is only slightly larger at 8.5×7.5 cm. Both appear to have been written by the same scribe, though the writing exhibits some variation. The writing of K 8605h, verso and K 8586b, recto share the overall impression as a neat and stylized sloping majuscule, whereas on K 8605h, recto and K 8586b, verso the writing is thicker and less formal. Yet, similarities of letter forms extend over all four sides, see e.g., the shape of the μ in three strokes with a longer left vertical, or ν with the oblique arriving higher on the right vertical, the shape of β in K 8586b, R, 7 and K 8605h, V, 7, or the shapes of the α .

The lines can be reconstructed with the help of parallels, and the reconstruction suggests that both leaves contained ca. 20 letters in each line. The approximately identical size, together with the identical scribe and related content, make it likely – though not beyond doubt – that both fragments come from the same codex. Since on K 8605h the side of the papyrus written across the fibres (\downarrow) was inscribed first, whereas on K 8586b it was the side written along the fibres (\rightarrow); the two fragments may come from the same double leaf.⁴ The textual reconstruction implies that this cannot have been the middle leaf of a quire; at least one more, now lost, double leaf is expected between the two fragments, which contained the end of the anaphora, the fraction prayer, and the beginning of the prayer of inclination.

Of K 8605h no edges are extant, only six incomplete lines on the recto and seven on the verso. Of K 8586b only the left edge (recto) is preserved with a left/inner margin of ca. 1.5 cm. The reconstruction of the text suggests that altogether ca. 17 lines were lost at the bottom and the top, between recto and verso, which would suggest an original height of ca. 25 cm for the leaf. On K 8605h a small oblique stroke in the upper case (V, 2) and on K 8586b dots in the upper case (R, 7 and V, 4 and 7) divide clauses; these may be variants of the same sign.

2 Both were edited by SATZINGER: *Koptische Papyrus-Fragmente*, as no. 6 and 4, on pp. 430–431 and 428–429, though without being identified.

3 See MIHÁLYKÓ: *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 140–152.

4 On the makeup of a papyrus codex, see TURNER: *Typology*, 43–71.

The handwriting is a sloping majuscule characteristic of Western Theban scribes. The closest parallel is the hand of Mark the priest of the *topos* of St Mark, a member of the non-Chalcedonian clergy of the area in the early seventh century;⁵ compare e.g., P.Mon.Epiph. 592 + 49 (Pl. 1) for his more formal style, and e.g., O.Saint-Marc 101 or 102 (Fig. 130–131) for his less formal writing.⁶ This parallel places the fragments into the seventh century, though, given the stylistic conservatism of Western Theban scribes, the eighth century cannot be excluded either.

Besides the typical hand, the acquisition history also points to a provenance from Western Thebes. The fragments were acquired as part of a lot containing several Sahidic papyrus fragments. One of them, the inedited inv. K 8605i, contains a list of personal names, presumably saints, combined with toponyms in two fragmentary columns.⁷ The first column reads: [?]c nερμοντ | [?] α]νατωλλαιος | [?]c ντναδε | [θεοδω?]ρος μπρεννατον |⁵ [θεοδω?]ρος μπβαδγ | [?] νωιητ | [?] c νωιητ | [μακαρι]c πρμηκημε “[?] of Ermont, [?] the Eastern/Anatolian,⁸ [?] of Tnaje, [Theodo]ros⁹ of Enaton, [Theodo]ros⁹ of Pbaw, [?] of Scetis, [?] of Scetis, [Makario]s the Egyptian.” That in this list of saints two names from Ermont (Hermonthis) and the nearby Naje⁹ are included marks a local interest, which implies that this list, and by extension the entire lot, comes from the broader environs of Western Thebes.

K 8605h preserves the intercession for the deceased from an anaphora, for classes of the deceased and the departed bishops. The preserved words show a

5 On his person see DEKKER: Episcopal Networks, 111–113.

6 I cite papyrus editions according to their conventional abbreviation in the “Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic, and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca, and Tablets,” accessible at <http://papyri.info/docs/checklist>.

7 It was mentioned (under its old Innsbruck inventory) in WINLOCK/CRUM: The Monastery of Epiphanius, vol. 1, 120 n. 14, who interpreted the items in the list as monasteries. However, in col. 2 the beginning of three names, θεοδ[ωρος] in l. 3, and παππ[ου] in ll. 4 and 5, are preserved, and this suggests that persons are intended. The last adjective “the Egyptian” may refer to Macarius the Egyptian, and the names belonging to the Northern Egyptian Scetis and Enaton are also best interpreted as monastic saints.

8 TIMM: Das christlich-koptische Ägypten, vol. 4, 1612 interprets this to be a reference to a monastery near Jeme called “the Eastern one”, πειεβτ in Coptic and al-Mašriq in Arabic. However, if the list is of saints, [πα]νατωλλαιος may be understood instead as the adjective of the soldier saint Theodore the Oriental (cf. PAPAConstantinou: Le culte des saints, 100).

9 On the toponym Naje, TIMM: Das christlich-koptische Ägypten, vol. 4, 1719, who speculates that it may also be in Western Thebes.

remarkable correspondence with the Sahidic redaction of the anaphora of Severus of Antioch preserved in the so-called ‘Great Euchologion’ of the White Monastery (MONB.VE), p. 107, 17–23 and 108, 7–12.¹⁰ The similarity in wording, and especially the mention of Basil of Cesarea, unique to these two texts, suggests that the fragment may preserve the Sahidic redaction of the anaphora of Severus of Antioch. The second fragment, K 8586b, preserves a popular prayer of inclination before communion ὁ θεὸς οὕτως ἀγαπήσας ἡμᾶς, which is attested in Greek, Bohairic, Sahidic, Syriac, and Arabic in multiple redactions. My reconstruction is based on a contemporary Sahidic parallel, O.Crum 6, found at the monastery of St. Phoibammon, also in Western Thebes.¹¹ For both texts, see the liturgical commentary below for details.

2 Edition

K 8605h recto

↓	1	[ca. 6] . [.]νε[ν]ειοτ[ε μπατ-]
	2	[ριαρχη]ς: μπροφητ[ηс παποс-]
	3	[τολοс] νεγαγγελιστ[ηс μαρτυ-]
	4	[ροс ν]ρομολογηт[ηс ca. 5]
	5	[ca. 5] αγω τρεφει[ε πνουγε]
	6	[αγω τ]ετο μπαρο[εнос noγ-]
		[ειω νηη]-----

K 8605h verso

	-----		[ηταγ-]
→	1	[ωρη ν]κοτ[κ ² χηη] ιακ[ωβοс]	
	2	[πεπεс]κοποс/ αγω [παποс-]	
	3	[τολοс] μαρτυροс ω[αεραη]	

10 LANNE: Le Grande Euchologe, 320 and 322.

11 I have revised Crum’s ed.pr. (O.Crum 6) for my PhD, see MIHÁLYKÓ: Writing the Christian Liturgy, 221–222. A new edition is forthcoming in my corpus of liturgical prayers on papyrus.

4 [ετεν]οϋ παϊ ενταϋ[ca. 6]
 5 [ca. 3 τπ]ετις ποροδοϋζ[ος]
 6 [αρι πνε]εϋε δε οη πϋ[οεις ηνεκ-]
 7 [πετο]γααβ βασιλ[ιος ηη]
 [γρηγοριος]-----

K 8586b recto

 → 1 νετκω[λϋ επεσιτ νακ ηηα-]
 2 πηϋε αϋ[ω ηιτββο ηπεηρω-]
 3 με ετρηροϋη [ηεε ετφογααβ]
 4 ησι πεκωηη[ε ημονογενης]
 5 παϊ ετηηαχι[τη ca. 9]
 6 τεηου ρητη ηει[ηϋστηριον ετ-]
 7 ογααβ' αϋω ηα[ροϋπωτ εβολ]
 8 ησι τηορηα η[η ηλογισμος]
 9 τηροϋ ετχαρημ' ε[ϋσοτη' αϋω εϋ-]
 10 ϋτωτ ρητη ηη[ηοϋτε ηταϋ-]
 11 χποϋ εβολ ρη [ca. 10]

K 8586b verso

 ↓ 1 [ca. 15 ηηκ]οϋη[ος]
 2 [ηαροϋπωτ δε] εβολ ηηον
 3 [ησι πεωηη ηη] τηηηρεϋα-
 4 [ca. 6 ηηκακι]α' εϋσοτη αϋω
 5 [εϋπηη ρητη?] ηπεηταϋωτ
 6 [ηηχειρογρα]φον ηηεηηοβε
 7 [επεσταϋρος ηη]ηαϋ' ηαροϋπωτ
 8 [εβολ ησι ηηια]βολος ηη ηεϋδαι-
 9 [μωη τηροϋ] εϋσοτη αϋω εϋ-
 10 [πηη ρητη η]πεηταϋχαϊο ε[βολ]

11 [ⲛⲁⲣⲭⲏ ⲧⲏⲣⲟ]ϣ ⲛⲏⲉⲑ[ⲟⲟ]ϣ ϣⲁϣ[ⲁ-]
 [ⲓⲟ]-----

K 8605h, R, 1–2. πατριάρχης 2. προφήτης 2–3. ἀπόστολος 3. εὐαγγελίστης 3–4. μάρτυρος 4. ὁμολογίτης 6. παρθένος V, 2. ἐπίσκοπος 2–3. ἀπόστολος 3. μάρτυρος, μμάρτυρος e ed.pr. 5. πίστις; ὀρθόδοξος KM 8586b, R, 4. μονογενής 6. τᾶνοϣ ed.pr., μυστήριον 8. πορνεία, τπορνια corr. ex ππορνια; λογισμός V, 2. μιαρⲛ ed.pr. 4. κακία 6. χειρόγραφον,]βον ed.pr. 7. σταυρός 8. διάβολος 8–9. δαίμων 9. εϣσοτⲛ ed.pr. 11. ἀρχή

“^{K 8605h, R} ...our fathers [the patriarchs], prophets, [apostles], evangelists, [martyrs], confessors... ⁵ and[?] the God-bearer and ever-virgin... ^v [who have] fallen asleep[?] [beforehand since] James the bishop and martyr [apostle until now], those who... ⁵ the orthodox faith. Remember also, Lord, [your] saints, Basil [and Gregory]...”

“^{K 8586b, R} ...who bow [the] heads [to you], and [purify our] inner man [the way] your [only-begotten] Son [is holy], ⁵ he whom we will take... now through these holy [mysteries], and may the fornication and all unchaste [thoughts flee away, overcome by[?] and] ¹⁰ trembling from [God, who was] born from... ^v ...[the sins of the] world. [May the wrath] and the [remembrance of evil flee] away from us overcome by and ⁵ [fleeing] him who nailed the record of our sins [on the cross] with himself. May the devil and his demons flee [away] overcome by and ¹⁰ [fleeing] him who triumphed over the evil [powers], triumphing...”

3 Commentary

K 8605h, R, 1–6. These lines contain a list of saints of a type well known from various anaphoras.¹² The list reconstructed here does not agree with any of these lists, not even with that in the Sahidic redaction of the anaphora of Severus, which

12 BUDDÉ: Die ägyptische Basiliosanaphora, 484–485.

is close to other similar lists from the ‘Great Euchologion’.¹³ Instead, it is closer to its Syriac redaction, to which it only adds ‘evangelists’.¹⁴

1–2. In these lists of saints, ‘prophets’ are usually preceded by ‘patriarchs’ and followed by ‘apostles’, the reconstruction is thus rather certain.

3–4. The reading of ⲛⲉ at the beginning is difficult, as before γ a vertical line is visible. Yet, the rest of the line is clear, making the reconstruction likely; an ϵ with straight back is found also in K 8586b, R, 3 and 9. Since most similar lists have ‘martyrs’ immediately before ‘confessors’, ⲙⲙⲁⲣⲧⲩⲣⲟⲥ can safely be reconstructed in the lacuna between ll. 3 and 4. In the Sahidic recension of the anaphora of Severus (and other similar lists in the ‘Great Euchologion’) ‘evangelists’ appear at the end of the list, preceded by ‘preachers’. By contrast, this couple appears between ‘apostles’ and ‘martyrs’ in the Syriac anaphora of Timothy of Alexandria.¹⁵ Our papyrus probably has only ‘evangelists’ in the same position; if the estimated number of missing letters is correct, ⲛⲕⲏⲣⲩⲗ ‘preachers’ would hardly fit in the lacuna between ll. 2 and 3.

5–6. These lines contain the titles of the Virgin Mary, who is invoked as the first of the saints. Two of these are clearly legible: $\text{ⲧⲣⲉⲩⲭⲏⲥⲓⲛⲉⲓⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩⲧⲉ}$, which translates ⲑⲉⲟⲩⲟⲕⲟⲥ also in Louvain, Ms Lefort Copte 28, fol. vi, V, 3–4,¹⁶ and $[\text{ⲧ}] \text{ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲙⲡⲁⲣⲟⲩⲛⲟⲩⲉⲓⲛⲙ}$, which translates ⲁⲓⲓⲡⲁⲣⲑⲉⲛⲟⲥ in P.Oslo inv. 1665, 8.¹⁷ The connection to the previous line remains uncertain. If the reading ⲁⲒⲩⲱ is correct, it would imply a further attribute of Mary (e.g., ⲧⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ‘holy,’ ⲧⲉⲧⲁⲉⲟⲟⲩ ‘glorious,’ or ⲧⲉⲛⲭⲟⲓⲉⲓⲥ ‘our lady’). This reconstruction leaves no space for the conventional transition from the groups of saints (Greek ἔξαιρέτως , Sahidic $\text{ⲛⲉⲣⲟⲟⲩⲟⲩ ⲁⲉ (ⲛⲉⲣⲟⲟⲩⲟⲩ)}$). Note that the Syriac anaphora of Severus too misses this transition, and one codex (K1) of the Syriac anaphora of Timothy connects ‘confessors’ directly with Mary through ‘and’.¹⁸ Accordingly, this text too may have connected Mary to the groups with ⲙⲛ ‘and’.

13 P. 39, 10–17, p. 135, 26–136, 3, and Cairo, Coptic Museum, inv. 3911, V, 3–11, cf. LANNE: *Le Grand Euchologe*, 292, 340–342, and 386.

14 *Anaphorae Syriacae* vol. 1.1, 74–75.

15 *Anaphorae Syriacae* vol. 1.1, 36–37.

16 Ed. DORESSE/LANNE: *Un témoin archaïque*, 26.

17 Ed. MARAVELA/MIHÁLYKÓ/WEHUS: *A Coptic Liturgical Prayer*, 209.

18 *Anaphorae Syriacae* vol. 1.1, 36–37 l. 9.

V, 1–4. The reconstruction of the description of the deceased bishops is aided by two parallels from the ‘Great Euchologion’: the anaphora of Severus p. 108, 6–9: ἀρι μᾶεεγε πχθεοις ννεπισκοπος νορθοδοζος νταγωρη νκοτκ χιν ιακωβος παρχνεπισκοπος αγω πμαρτυρος φαρραι ετενογ “remember, Lord, all orthodox bishops, who have fallen asleep before since James the archbishop and martyr up to now,” and an untitled anaphora on p. 136, 15–19: ἀρι μᾶεεγε πχθεοις ννενειοτε νεπισκοπος χιν ιακωβος πεπισκοπος αγω παποστολος αγω πμαρτυρος μεν νενταγρ επισκοπος τηρογ φα ποογ η ροογ “remember, Lord, our fathers the bishops since James the bishop, apostle, and martyr, and everyone who was bishop up to the present day.”¹⁹ The wording does not agree entirely with either text, though it is closer to the Sahidic anaphora of Severus; the reconstruction remains uncertain.

4–6. ναῖ ενταγ[ca. 9 ττι]στις νορθοδοζ[ος]: The Sahidic redaction of the anaphora of Severus has νετσοπς ρη πφαχε ρα ττιςτις νορθοδοζος “who comfort in the word for the orthodox faith,” which is somewhat too long for the estimated space. While it remains possible, a similar verb may have been used instead, e.g., ενταγ[ταφε ογειω νττι]στις νορθοδοζ[ος] “who preached the orthodox faith,” οτ ενταγ[ρομολογει νττι]στις νορθοδοζ[ος] “who confess the orthodox faith.” The end of l. 6 was probably left empty to start the new intercession in the new line.

6–7. The reconstruction is based on the Sahidic redaction of the anaphora of Severus in the ‘Great Euchologion’, p. 108, 11–12 ἀρι μᾶεεγε πχθεοις ννενειοτε ετογααβ βασιλιος μη γρηγοριος “remember, Lord, our fathers Basil and Gregory”.²⁰ As ννενειοτε ετογααβ is too long for the expected space, a shorter wording, ννεκπετογααβ, will be reconstructed.

K 8586b, R, 1–2. The reconstruction is based on O.Crum 6, 6–7, which in my new edition reads νετσωλχ επερετ νακ νναπηγε αγω νγτββο [ν]πνρωμε ετρηρογν.

3. O.Crum 6, 7 has κατα θε, but that seems too long, though not impossible; the equivalent νεε is preferred.

19 LANNE: Le Grand Euchologe, 322 and 342.

20 LANNE: Le Grand Euchologe, 322.

3–4. The reconstruction is based on O.Crum 6, 7–8 ετφογααβ νσι η[εκ]ωηρ[ε] | νμονογενης παι ετμηαχι[τ]η.

5. None of the other redactions contain any additional phrases here, thus the lacuna cannot be filled.

6–9. The reconstruction is based on O.Crum 6, 8–9 τενοϋ ριτη νιμϋστη[ριον] | ετογααβ αγω ηα[ροϋ]ηωτ εβολ· νσι τπορνια μν ηλογιϋ[μοϋ].

9. O.Crum 6, 10 has εγκοτη αγω εγηητ ρητη. The second verb diverges, but the first may coincide with the wording here, though with the variant spelling also attested in V, 4.

10–11. The reconstruction is based on O.Crum 6, 10–11 ηηη[οϋ]τηε ντ[αϋ|α] | ποϋ εβολ ρη [ο]γη[αρθενο]ϋ.

V, 1. This may be the end of the clause πετνιαμι μπινοβε μπκομοϋ “who takes away the sins of the world” (cf. Jn 1:29), broken also on O.Crum 6, but extant in all other redactions.

3–4. The reconstruction is based on O.Crum 6, 24, where [εβ]ο[λ] ημον νσι πσωντ μν is preserved. The equivalent of τμητρεφα[ca. 6 ητκακι]α is lost there and cannot be reconstructed. It is a translation of the Greek μνησικακία, which the Bohairic *textus receptus* renders as †μετρεφερφεμεγι ντε †κακια.²¹ However, this does not seem possible here, as the last letter of the line is an α. A form of ἀναμνήσκειν is a possibility, however, this verb is not attested in Coptic as a loan word, and it remains unclear what form it would have taken.

5–7. The phrase is a modified quotation of Col 2:14 εαφωτε εβολ ηπεχειρογραφον ετερον ρη ηδογμα... αφωτ ημοϋ επεϋφοϋ.²² While O.Crum 6 is broken here, the Bohairic *textus receptus* preserves a similar text: εθε εν εταφτητ ηπισθι ηχια ντε νεννοβι εβοϋη επισταροϋ.²³

8–9. The Bohairic *textus receptus* (as well as the Greek) has the ‘demons’ and the ‘devil’ in reversed order: ηδεμων μεν ηδιαβολοϋ ηροϋφωτ.²⁴ The reconstruction of τηροϋ, unparalleled by the other redactions, is likely because of the abundance of space.

21 NICOLOTTI: Il libro, 746.

22 HORNER: The Coptic Version, vol. 5, 338–340.

23 NICOLOTTI: Il libro, 746.

24 NICOLOTTI: Il libro, 746.

9–11. The reconstruction of εΥΠΗΓ ΖΗΤΥ is based on O.Crum 6, 28, where this phrase is legible. In the continuation a paraphrase of Col 2:15 is expected, which in Sahidic reads as follows: εΑΦΑΑΦ ΚΑΖΗΥ ΝΝΑΡΧΗ ΜΝ ΝΕΖΟΥΓΙΑ ΔΦΟΥΝΖΟΥ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΝ ΟΥΠΑΡΡΗΘΙΑ. ΕΑΦΧΑΙΟΥΥ ΕΖΡΑΙ ΝΖΗΤΥ.²⁵ It is apparent from this fragment that the Sahidic translation employed the verb χαιο as the first verb, but the traces towards the end of V, 11 imply that the same may have been the second one as well. Indeed, in O.Crum 6, 29 it also seems to appear in the second position.

4 Liturgical Commentary

The first fragment, K 8605h, preserves the intercession for the deceased from an anaphora: on the recto a list of categories of saints ending with the Virgin Mary, and on the verso an intercession for deceased orthodox bishops starting with the apostle James, the first bishop of Jerusalem, complete with a reference to St. Basil (of Caesarea). The preserved text amounts only to a few words, but these show remarkable (though not verbatim) correspondence with the Egyptian (Sahidic) redaction of the anaphora of Severus of Antioch, as preserved in the ‘Great Euchologion’, p. 107, 17–23 and 108, 7–12. Of particular interest in this regard is the reference to St. Basil (followed by St. Gregory in the ‘Great Euchologion’ and likely here as well), which is not paralleled by any other anaphora of Egyptian or other provenance.²⁶ It is not even contained in the Syriac redaction of the anaphora of Severus of Antioch,²⁷ which differs considerably in this intercession.²⁸ This, alongside the parallels in the rest of the text, makes a strong case for my hypothesis that the fragment belonged to the Sahidic redaction of the anaphora of Severus of Antioch, even if in a somewhat different wording. Some of these divergences may be explained by the fact that the wording of the anaphora in the ‘Great Euchologion’ was approximated to other texts in the same codex through the typical

25 HORNER: *The Coptic Version*, vol. 5, 340.

26 BUDE: *Die ägyptische Basiliosanaphora*, 581, who also pointed out that Severus of Antioch had special reverence for Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzen.

27 *Anaphorae Syriacae* vol. 1.1, 74–77.

28 On the relationship between the Sahidic and Syriac redactions of this anaphora, see BAUMSTARK: *Die syrische Anaphora*, esp. 95–98, where he claims that the Sahidic is in most parts closer to a hypothesized Greek original, though he does not analyse this particular intercession.

processes of ‘Angleichung’, the harmonization of certain malleable parts of anaphoras used in the same context, to which intercessions are particularly liable.²⁹ If my hypothesis is correct, this papyrus would lend some support to Baumstark’s (early) sixth-century dating of the Greek original of the anaphora.³⁰

Yet, caution is required. The fragment is very small, and the extant parts (except for the mention of Basil) have parallels in other Syrian anaphoras as well, especially in that of Timothy of Alexandria (see notes to R, 3–4 and 5–6). In addition, the recto consists of stock phrases, and only the verso is more peculiar. Therefore, my hypothesis cannot be proven beyond doubt. Yet, even if it does not hold water, the reference to the bishops following James, the first bishop of Jerusalem (instead of the Alexandrian line of succession headed by Mark the Evangelist) highlights a Syrian/Palestinian provenance of, or influence on the text.³¹

Beside the Sahidic redaction of the anaphora in the ‘Great Euchologion’, where the possible ascription to the church father is lost, an anaphora or liturgy attributed to Severus is mentioned on two further occasions in Egyptian sources. First, the Arabic Synaxarion narrates in the entry for Apa Abraham (founder of a monastery near Farshut in Upper Egypt) that when an angel told him that he was to be ordained a priest, he also taught him the ‘canon’ of Severus, and the newly ordained priest often officiated this ‘canon’.³² W.E. Crum furthermore notes that “a fragment belonging to Prof. Sayce preserves the title of an Anaphora of Severus,” but he does not provide further specifics, and I have not been able to locate the fragment.³³ If both testimonies in fact refer to the known anaphora

29 Cf. PARENTI: *L’anafora di Crisostomo*, 66–67.

30 BAUMSTARK: *Die syrische Anaphora*, 98. Codrington, on the other hand, dated the Greek original to the period between 600–650 (*Anaphorae Syriacae* vol. 1, 55).

31 Besides the Sahidic redaction of the anaphora of Severus of Antioch, yet another anaphora in the *Great Euchologion*, p. 136, 15–19 (LANNE: *Le Grand Euchologe*, 342) prays for the bishops fallen asleep since James. This untitled anaphora also prays for Sion, the mother of all churches (p. 133, 7–8), a detail that finds a parallel in P.Lond.Copt. I 150 (London, British Library, Or. 3580 A.9 (=A.7)), V, 14–15. These Sahidic anaphoras reflect an ecclesiology that places non-Chalcedonian churches in the apostolic lineage of Jerusalem (which was at the time in Chalcedonian hands).

32 BASSET: *Le synaxaire arabe jacobite*, 686.

33 CRUM: *New Manuscripts*, 499 n. 2. According to the online indices of Crum’s estate in the Griffith Institute, Oxford, his notebook 83 contains transcripts of ostraca once in Sayce’s possession, now in the Bodleian’s or Queen’s College, <https://archive.griffith.ox.ac.uk/index.php/crum-24-83> (accessed on 06/01/2025). However this fragment is not among them. I thank Jennifer Turner at the Griffith Institute for this information.

of Severus, together with the ‘Great Euchologion’ and perhaps the present papyrus, these would imply a relative popularity of this anaphora in Upper Egypt.³⁴

The second fragment, KM inv. 8586b, preserves a prayer of inclination before communion ὁ θεὸς οὕτως ἀγαπήσας ἡμᾶς, which was very popular in Egypt. The prayer consists of three parts: It begins with a rephrased citation from Rom 8:15–17, followed by a stereotyped request with a reference to the inclined posture of the congregation (the end is preserved here in R, 1–7). The bulk of the prayer is a long list of various sins and demonic powers. In each clause, a group of these is commanded to flee, quasi exorcised, through Jesus, who is referred to through Scriptural statements that represent the opposite of these sins. The final part is a stereotyped request for worthy communion.

This prayer has a complex textual history. It is attested in another, slightly different Sahidic redaction on a seventh or eighth-century ostrakon from the monastery of St. Phoibammon (Deir el-Bahari) in Western Thebes (O.Crum 6). It is furthermore found in Greek on a seventh-century parchment strip from the Fayum (BKT VI 7 2, R). The three roughly contemporary papyrological witnesses imply its popularity in the seventh–eighth centuries. The complete Greek text is found in a fourteenth-century manuscript, Paris, BnF, Gr. 325 in the liturgy of St. Basil.³⁵ Its Bohairic redaction entered the *textus receptus* of the liturgy of St. Cyril,³⁶ and an Arabic redaction is found in the Melkite presanctified liturgy of St. Mark in Sinai Ar. 237 (13th c.).³⁷ Furthermore, it is included in the Syriac liturgy of Severus of Antioch in two redactions: of the eleven codices used by Codrington for the critical edition, two contain redaction A³⁸ and the rest redaction B.³⁹

34 Severus of Antioch was also otherwise a popular *Liturgievater* in Egypt. In the Bohairic tradition prayers attributed to him include a prayer of preparation for the altar (BRIGHMAN: Liturgies, 144, cf. MIKHAIL: The Presentation of the Lamb, 158), a prayer of kiss of peace (BRIGHMAN: Liturgies, 162 and NICOLOTTI: Il libro, 650–651), and two prayers of fraction (BRIGHMAN: Liturgies, 181 and ZANETTI: L’inventaire, 789 no. 47); the Sahidic tradition attributed to him at least a prayer of fraction (LANNE: Le Grand Euchologe, 370), and a prayer against snakebite preserved in Greek on a seventh-century papyrus was also ascribed to him (P.Vindob. G 239 + 29508 (Pap.Graec. Mag. P12), cf. RÖMER: Gebet und Zauber des Severus von Antiochia).

35 RENAUDOT: Liturgiarum, vol. 1, 77–78.

36 NICOLOTTI: Il libro, 744–749 § 1027.

37 MIKHAIL: The Presanctified Liturgy, 168–169 (text), 174 (translation).

38 Rome, BAV, Borgia Syt. 159 (1247, rather mutilated), and Paris, BnF, Syt. 75 (1524).

39 Anaphorae Syriacae vol. 1, 52.

The various redactions of the prayer can be divided into three groups: 1.) a shorter version is represented by the Syriac redaction B, 2.) a longer one by the Greek, Sahidic, and Bohairic redactions and the Syriac redaction A, and 3.) an abbreviated one by the Arabic redaction. The main difference is that the Syriac redaction B (1.) lacks the citation from Rom 8:15–17 at the beginning, collapses a couple of the clauses in the middle part, and, most notably, misses the final request for worthy communion. The Arabic redaction (3.) is a condensed form of the longer redaction (2.), which removed the Scriptural statements on Jesus from each clause, thereby reducing the middle part to a mere list of vices, while it kept Rom 8:15–17 at the beginning and the requests for worthy communion at the end.⁴⁰

The longer redaction (2.) is remarkably stable in wording. The text of BKT VI 7 2, R is essentially identical with that in Paris, BnF, Gr. 325; the two Coptic and the Syriac A versions diverge only slightly. The differences between the Sahidic and Bohairic versions imply that they are independent translations from the Greek, whereas the two Sahidic redactions represent the same translation with minor variation. Besides other minor differences, the redactions within this group diverge in the following:

- » The extent of the request for worthy communion: the Syriac redaction A contains a shorter version, to which O.Crum 6 and the Bohairic *textus receptus* appended one more clause, while Paris, BnF, Gr. 325 and Sinai Ar. 237 added a reworked citation of Ps 135:2 to the end.
- » The clause “demons and the devil”: the Syriac redaction A merged it with the previous clause.
- » The verb φευγέτω “may it flee”: It is a constitutive part of every clause, but it was elliptically omitted from the Greek (and the Syriac redaction B) after the first clause and kept in the Bohairic only in the last two clauses. The two Sahidic redactions repeat it in every clause, while the Syriac redaction A employs a different verb each time.

40 Pace MIKHAIL: *The Presanctified Liturgy*, 199–200, who speculated that “the prayer in [the presanctified liturgy of Mark] is less developed and may perhaps be an earlier redaction than the one in [the Bohairic liturgy of St. Cyril],” both going back to an Egyptian prayer of perhaps the fifth century. However, he did not consider the Syrian parallels. Since the core idea of the prayer is the exorcism of vices by Scriptural statements on Christ, the Arabic redaction is better understood as a condensed version of the longer redaction, where an essential element was removed, but secondary clauses were kept.

- » The preposition *διὰ* “through”: Although an essential part of every clause, it is elliptically omitted from the Greek text. It is included in a simple translation in both Syriac and in the Bohairic redactions, whereas the Sahidic redactions substitute it with various longer clauses (e.g., *εὑροσπι ἀγω εὑρητ ζητῆ* “overcome by and fleeing from”), which differ in the two witnesses. The addition of these clauses as well as the repetition of “may it flee” and variants was likely motivated by the elliptical Greek text, which the translators supplemented as they saw appropriate.

Altogether, it can be speculated that the prayer first circulated, still malleable, in the shorter redaction (1.), as this is the only redaction to miss the stereotyped requests for worthy communion, which are easier added than removed. Their addition may have been motivated by the conversion of the prayer from a prayer for the dismissal of non-communicants into a prayer of preparation for communion. As Taft has argued, this shift happened after the disintegration of the penitential discipline in the first half of the fifth century.⁴¹ Our prayer with its exorcistic insistence on the expulsion of vices is perfectly suitable indeed as a dismissal for penitents. This shorter redaction may originate from Syria or Palestine, since in Egypt only the longer version is found. The prayer was then imported into the Egyptian liturgy, perhaps during its non-Chalcedonian reform under Syrian–Palestinian influence.⁴² The impetus of this reform may also account for the popularity of the prayer in seventh- and eighth-century Egypt. It may even be speculated that the codification and dissemination of the longer redaction was the work of non-Chalcedonian circles in Syria and/or Egypt. That the prayer eventually entered a Melkite liturgy of the presanctified as well may only show that borrowing between the two denominations was not as uncommon as once thought – though alternatively it may imply a borrowing prior to the non-Chalcedonian reform.

If the identification of the anaphora and the attribution of both fragments to the same codex is correct, it means that in seventh-century Western Thebes the anaphora of Severus circulated together with a prayer equally associated with him in the Syriac tradition. Further prayers of the same Syrian liturgy were also

41 See TAFT: *The Precommunion Rites*, 65–66, 106–13, and 166–97; TAFT: *The Inclination Prayer*.

42 See BRAKMANN: *Zwischen Pharos und Wüste*, 352–360 and BUDE: *Die ägyptische Basiliosanaphora*, 580–581.

used in Egypt. The fraction prayer is preserved in Bohairic and Sahidic.⁴³ The embolism circulated independently in Sahidic.⁴⁴ The prayer of thanksgiving after communion entered the *textus receptus* of the Bohairic liturgy of St. Cyril and two Sahidic euchologia from the White Monastery.⁴⁵ It is thus not impossible that once the entire formulary circulated in Egypt. It may even have been used as a whole in Western Thebes. But that would be too bold to conclude from these two tiny papyrus fragments.

5 Gallery



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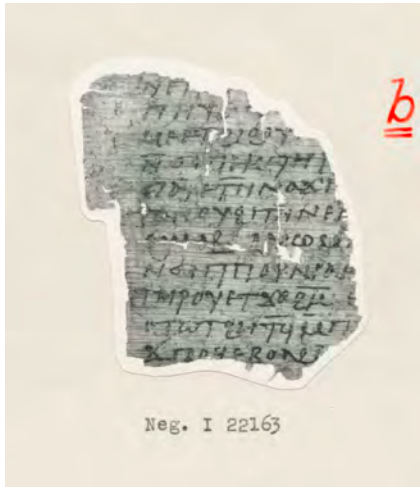


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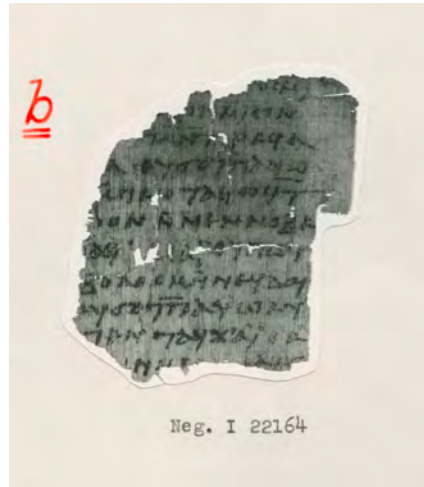
43 ZANETTI: Inventaire, 789–790 no. 47, in the Bohairic codex it is attributed to Severus.

44 On Louvain, MS Lefort Copte fol. viii V (ed. DORESSE / LANNE: Un témoin archaïque) and on the double leaf Cairo, The Papyrus Collection of the Society for Coptic Archaeology, inv. no. 1 (ed. SOBHY: Two Leaves).

45 In MONB.VF (London, BL, Or. 6954 (30), V, 20) only the first line is preserved, see <https://coptot.manuscriptroom.com/web/sahidic-euchologia/monb.vf>, whereas W.E. Crum reports the beginning of the same prayer, with attribution to the patriarch S(everus?) in the inedited euchologion, Manchester, John Rylands Library, Suppl. 11 (CRUM: New Coptic Manuscripts, 498–499).



Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum,
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