

Apophthegmata Patrum 3

Translation of the Coptic text

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In this part I have made more extensive use of the Greek version (*PG* 65: 71ff.) and the Latin version (*PL* 73: 995ff.), which has tended to make the notes longer than I had originally intended. It contains some of the longest sayings in the collection. Several involve Poimên, who features in more sayings than anyone else.

156. ... while they were sitting. He said to them: 'Arise and greet the monks, and you will be blessed. For they speak with God the whole time and their mouths are holy.'

157. It was said of Apa Papnoute: He does not hasten to drink wine. After walking for a time he came to a thieves' hut and found them drinking. The leader recognized him and, knowing that he did not drink, saw him in great distress. He filled a cup with wine and, with his sword in his hand, said to the elder: 'If you do not drink this, I will kill you.' The elder knew that he wanted to perform a commandment, wishing to benefit him, took it and drank. The brigand leader repented, saying: 'Forgive me, my father, for having distressed you.' The elder said to him: 'I believe in God that He will be merciful to you for this cup of wine in this life and the life to come.'

158. Hyperichios said: 'Save your neighbour from sin with all your strength without insults. For God does not reject from Himself those whom you turn¹ towards Him. Let there be no bad and wicked word in your heart against your brother and you will be able to say: *Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.*'²

¹ Typographical error: read ΠΝΕΤΚΚΤΟ ΠΜΟΥ ΕΡΟϚ

² Matt. 6, 14ff.

159. An ascetic saw someone possessed by a demon who was unable to fast. Through the love of God he did not ask about his own welfare, but that of another. He prayed that the demon would leave that one³ alone and enter himself so that that one would be free from distress. So, God heard him. In place of that one the demon burdened the ascete and the ascete extended his fasting with prayers and increased his asceticism. Out of love God cast⁴ the demon from him within a few days.

160. There were two brothers in the Cells. One, who was an elder, called upon the younger: 'Let us live together.' The younger said: 'I am a sinner. I cannot live with you, father.' The elder said: 'Yes, you can.' The elder was pure and did not wish to hear that there was a monk with thoughts of fornication in him. He said: 'Give us a week and then we will talk.' He, the elder, came wishing to test him, the younger brother.⁵ He said to him: 'I have encountered great temptation this week, my father. I went to the town to perform services and I fell with⁶ a woman. The elder said: 'There is repentance.' The brother replied: 'Yes.' The elder said: 'I will bear half of the sin with you.' The brother said: 'We will be able to live together.' And they remained with each other until they died.

161. An elder said: 'If one asks you for something and you do not constrain yourself and give it to him willingly, convinced to give what you give according to what is written: *If one compels you to walk a mile with him, walk two with him,*⁷ this means: if one asks you for something, give it with your whole heart and spirit.

162. It was said of one of the brothers that he made baskets and put handles on them. He heard his neighbour saying: 'What am I to do because the work is almost

3 **ⲡⲏⲏ**: the possessed.

4 The same reading **ⲏⲏⲗ** occurs also at the end of 166, where Chaîne has emended it. It looks like a stative form, which cannot have a direct object, but is in fact attested elsewhere as the form that can have a direct nominal object cf. R. Kasser *Compléments au dictionnaire copte* (1966) p. 40

5 The particle **ⲏⲒ**- usually introduces the subject, as in the first part of the sentence, and, less usually, the object, as here cf. Crum *Dictionary* 252a. My translation is a deliberate attempt to reflect this.

6 **ⲒⲈ** means 'fall, find' and **ⲏⲏ**- 'with', but Crum has no example of the combination. I wonder if the verb intended might be **ⲐⲮⲱⲒ ⲏⲏ**-, which in this context would mean 'to have sex with'. If this is the case, it looks as if there might be an elaborate word play on the two different understandings of cohabitation.

7 Mat. 5, 41

finished⁸ and I have no handles to put on my baskets ? ' The brother went and took the handles he had put on his baskets and brought them to his neighbour, saying: 'I have more than I need, take them and put them on your baskets.' He advanced the work of his brother and abandoned his own.

163. It was said of an elder in Shiêt that he became ill and wished to eat a little new bread. One of the zealous brothers heard this and took his cloak full of dried bread. He went to Egypt, exchanged them and brought to the elder. He⁹ saw that they were freshly baked and was surprised, but was not willing to eat, saying: 'It is the blood of this brother.' The elders begged him, saying: 'For the sake of the Lord, eat, lest the sacrifice of the brother be in vain.' After having been persuaded, he ate.

164. A brother asked an elder: 'There are two brothers, one quietly occupying his cell and fasting for six days, punishing himself greatly, while the other attends the sick. The work of which one is more acceptable to God ?' The elder said: 'If the one who fasts for six days hangs himself by his nostrils, he will not be able to equal the one who ministers to the sick.'

165. One of the brothers asked an elder: 'How is that nowadays some take great trouble with their regime and still not receive grace like the ancients ?' The elder said: 'That time was a time of love¹⁰ and each one helped his brother. But now, when love is cold, each one brings his brother down, and we will not receive grace.'

166. Three brothers once went to harvest and accepted an allotted 60 measures of land. ¹¹ One of them became ill on the first day and returned to his cell. One of his two companions said: 'Look, you see that the brother has become ill. Restrain¹² your thought a little, and I will do the same and let us believe that through his prayers we

8 Lit. 'has drawn near'

9 Lat. 'they'

10 **ΑΓΑΠΗ**

11 Coptic; **ϥⲥⲓⲱⲗⲉ**, where the second part means 'field' and the first is related to the word 'throw, sow', so a measure of tilled/sown land.

12 The same verb **ⲕⲓ ⲛ̅ⲑⲟⲛⲉ̅** (Crum *Dictionary* 822a) is used elsewhere, e.g. 161, where it is clearly meant in a positive sense of 'control'

will harvest his share.' When the work was finished, they came to receive the wage. They called to the brother, saying: 'Come, take your share of the wage.' He said to them: 'What wage? I have done no work.' They said: 'But it is through your prayers that we have a harvest. Come, take your wage.' There was a great dispute among them, and the sick brother said: 'I cannot accept it.' The other two refused, saying: 'Unless he takes his.' They went to an elder to decide the matter. The brother said: 'We three went to harvest. But on our way to the field on the first day I became ill and returned to my cell. I did not spend another day harvesting. The brothers are forcing me to receive a wage for which I have not worked.' The brothers said: 'We three went to harvest and we took sixty measures. If there had been three of us, it would have been difficult to harvest them. With the prayers of the brother we both harvested them and said to him: 'Come and take your wage and he refuses.' The elder, when he heard this, was surprised and said: 'Knock¹³ and let the brothers gather. When the brothers gathered, he said to them: 'Come, brothers and listen to a judgement of truth.' The elder told them everything. They cast out¹⁴ the brother because he ...¹⁵ to received his share of the wage. The brother went away weeping and sad at heart.

167. An elder said: 'The custom of our fathers was to visit the neophytes who came to be alone of their own accord¹⁶ to see how they were, lest one of them be tempted by a demon that had assailed his thoughts. If one were found who had been so assailed, they brought him the church and placed a vessel for washing at their feet and prayed over it for the one afflicted. They wash their feet¹⁷ and pour some of the water over him, and the brother is purified.'

168. There were two brothers for many years in one place. They were never in

13 Probably a reference to the wooden sounding board (καλαμαξί) used to assemble monks for collective activities

14 The ms. has the same reading **νηχ** followed by a direct object at the end of 159. It looks like the stative form, but appears to be

15 The text reads: **ψαλξιητε** 'he counted', which Chaîne translates as 'il refusait'. The Latin text at this point differs to such an extent that it does not help to understand the word. The only suggestion I can make is **ψαλθητε** 'he was ashamed to ..'

16 This phrase suggests that there were some who embraced other forms of life in the community.

17 Latin: 'hands'

conflict with each other and they lived in peace until the day of their death.¹⁸

169. A brother asked an elder: 'If I see a brother about whom I have heard a sin, I am not happy to receive him into my house. If I see a good brother, I receive him joyfully.' The elder said to him: 'If you do a little good with the good person, then do it with the other, for he is the one who is sick.'

170. An elder said: 'I have never loved anything that benefits me and harms my brother. For my hope is that the benefit to my brother is fruitful for me.'

171. A brother attending an elder who was sick: it happened that his body failed to function and it produced fluids that smelled. The brother thought: 'Run away. You can not bear this evil odour.' The brother took a vessel¹⁹ and moistened it from the water used to wash the wounds of the sick man and when he was thirsty he drank from it, He then thought: 'Do not run away and do not drink from this polluted water.' The brother made an effort and became strong, drinking from the washing water and attending the elder. God saw the trouble and love of the brother and made the washing water into pure water and healed the elder.

Concerning those who have visions (Book 16)

172. It was revealed to Apa Antonius in the desert: 'There is one like you in the city, a physician by trade, who gives most of his wealth to the needy and spends the whole day speaking to the three saints²⁰ and the angels.'

173. A brother went to the cell of Apa Arsenius in Shiêt and looked out of a window. He saw the elder all on fire. The brother was worthy to see and, when he knocked, the elder came out and saw the the brother as in a miracle and said to him: 'You were a long time knocking. Did you not see anything ?' The brother said: 'No.' And he spoke with him and left him.

¹⁸ The Coptic seems to be a much-reduced version of the text that has been translated into Latin.

¹⁹ Typographical error in the Coptic text.

²⁰ Are these the Three Children in Daniel 1, 6ff. ?

174. Apa Daniel the disciple of Apa Arsenius said: 'Apa Arsenius has told us, as if speaking about another, that there was an elder in his cell, perhaps the one he was speaking about. A voice came to him: "Come and I will show you the works of man." He arose and took him to a place where an Ethiopian was chopping wood. The Ethiopian made a great bundle and started to carry it but could not. Instead of carrying it he went and chopped more and added it to the load and did this several times. He then walked on and pointed out a man standing at a cistern drawing water and pouring it into a tank²¹ with a hole in it, and the water kept returning to the well. He said to him: "Come and I will show you something else. And he saw a temple and two men sitting on horses, with a piece of wood on their back,²² facing²³ each other and looking at each other, wishing to enter the gate but unable to, because of the wood they were carrying. Neither humbled himself to make way for the other that they might both carry the wood inside equally. And so they remained at the gate. These, he said, are those who support the yoke as if from righteousness in arrogance. They have not humbled themselves to agree to move forward on the humble road of Christ and they remain outside the kingdom of heaven. The Ethiopian²⁴ chopping wood is a man with many sins and instead of repenting he adds iniquity to iniquity. The one who draws water and pours it ²⁵ is a man who does good²⁶ but since he has an admixture of iniquity, through it he has destroyed also his good works. It is necessary for every man to attend to his works lest he labour in vain.'

175. Apa Daniel also said: 'Our father Arsenius said about someone in Shiêt that he was a very practical man, uncomplicated in faith but a mistaken simpleton.²⁷ He used to say that the bread that we receive on the altar²⁸ is not really the body of

21 *CrumDictionary* 336b suggests a connection with Coptic **CMANT** and Greek δεξαμενή.

22 Greek: πλάγιος. Latin : *transversum*

23 Latin: *contra*. The Coptic form **ΜΠΖΟΤΕ ΕΒΟΛ** might contain the word 'face' or it might be a form of **ΜΠΠΤΟ ΕΒΟΛ** 'in the presence of'. In any case, the meaning is not in doubt.

24 Latin: *ille*. In general the endings of the Latin and the Coptic versions diverge at this point.

25 The translation follows the reorganization of the text by Chaîne,

26 Chaîne's reconstruction **ΕΦΡ ΜΝ ΠΕΤΝΑΝΟΥΦ** seems to be an attempt to provide a literal version of κάλα μὲν ἔργα ποιῶν

27 'state of being a simpleton': **ΜΝΤΖΙΔΙΩΤΗΣ**

28 Coptic **ΜΑ**: 'place', which has to be extended to include the concept of 'sacrifice' (**ΦΟΥΣΟΟΥΦΕ**). The Greek text has

Christ, but its likeness. Two elders heard this. Knowing that he was a great man, they knew that he said this out of artlessness and ignorance. They came to him and said: "Father, we have heard about a faithless utterance to the effect that the bread we receive, it is as if²⁹ were in truth not the body of Christ but its likeness." The elder said that it was he who had said it. They then tried to persuade him, saying: "Do not confirm yourself in this, but rather as the Catholic Church tells us to believe that the bread we receive is the body of Christ in truth and not in likeness and that this cup is His blood in truth and not a vehicle.³⁰ As in the beginning He took earth from earth and made man according to His image, and nobody can say that it is not the image of God, even if it is not understandable or graspable. It is the same with the bread of which He said *This is my body*. We believe in truth that it is the body of Christ." The elder said: "If you do not persuade me in this matter, I will not be confirmed." They said: "Let us ask God this week about this mystery. We believe that He will reveal it to us." The elder accepted this gladly and begged God, saying: "Lord, who know that I am not maliciously faithless but that I will not unbelievingly or unknowingly mislead, reveal to me, Lord Jesus Christ." The elders went to their cells and prayed to God, saying: "Jesus Christ, will You reveal this mystery to this elder that he might believe and waste all of his efforts." God heard them together. When the week was completed, they came to the church and all three sat on a single pillow, the elder in the middle. Their inner eyes opened and when they put the bread down on the holy table, it appeared to the three like a small boy. When the priest stretched forth his hand to take the bread to break it, an angel came out of heaven, with a knife in his hand. He cut the small boy and poured his blood into the cup. When the presbyter broke the bread, the angel split the boy into small pieces. When they made their way to partake of the holy mysteries, the elder took a piece soaked in blood. When he saw, he was afraid and cried out: "I believe, Lord, that the bread is Your body and the cup Your blood." Thereupon the flesh in his hand became bread, according to the glory of the mystery. He put it into his mouth and took it to give thanks to the Lord. The elders said: "God knows the nature of man,

no such word.

29 Coptic: **ⲗⲟⲩⲥ**: perhaps for **ⲗⲟⲩⲥ** **ⲕⲉ** 'as if it were

30 ὄχημα. According to Liddell, Scott and Jones *Greek Lexicon* (1940) this term was also used by Neoplatonic philosophers. The Greek text has ἀντίτυπον

that it is impossible for him to eat raw flesh. For this reason He causes His body to become bread and his blood to become wine for those who receive Him in faith. They thanked God for what happened, that He did not let the elder waste his efforts. All three returned to their cells in joy.

176. Apa Daniel also spoke about a great elder living in the parts of Egypt,³¹ who said simply that Melchisedek was Christ the Son of God. Cyril the archbishop of Rakote was told about him and he sent for the elder. He knew that the elder was a miracle worker, that everything he asked for from God was revealed to him and that he spoke simply. He asked him cleverly: "Our father, I beg you, for my thought says that Melchisedek was the son of God and other thoughts come to me that he was not but a human priest of God. Since therefore I am in doubt, I have sent for you that you may pray to God for Him to make a revelation to you in this matter." The elder, feeling confident about his conduct, spoke freely: "Give me three days and I will ask God about this and tell you who is." He went away and prayed to God about this. Three days later he came to the archbishop, saying: "Melchisedek was a man." The archbishop said to him: "How do you know?" He said: "God told me about all the patriarchs from Adam to Melchisedek. The angel told me that this was Melchisedek and that I could be confident that it was." He went away preaching alone that Melchisedek was a man. The blessed Cyril was very happy.

177. The blessed Ephrem,³² as a boy, saw a dream or vision that a vine grew on his tongue, which increased and filled the whole earth under heaven. Its fruit was very good and all the birds came and ate from it. What they were to eat from the vine grew again more profusely.

178. Again, another of the saints in a dream saw divisions³³ of angels descending from heaven at God's command, with rolls in their hands, that is, a book written

31 Greek version: Lower Egypt. One might expect a phrase such as ܡܡܩܘܪܝܐ 'of the north' here cf. *Crum Dictionary* 313b

32 Perhaps Ephrem the Syrian. The image of the vine and the tongue is closely associated with Ephrem, but I cannot locate any passage in Syriac except for the reference to Sebastian Brock *Hymns on Paradise* (1990), but I cannot check this publication.

33 ܛܘܪܡܐ used in the military sense

inside and outside,³⁴ they saying to each other³⁵: 'Who is worthy to work on this ?' Some said: 'So-and-so.' Another said: 'Such-and-such.' They answered saying: 'Truly they are good people and they are holy. They are also just people, but they cannot attempt it.' They said the name of many others among the saints. Finally, they said: 'There is nobody who can do this work but Ephrem.' The elder who had seen the vision saw that the roll was given to Ephrem. He arose in the morning and found Ephrem teaching and he listened to him as if a spring were bubbling from his mouth. The elder saw this vision and knew that the things coming from his lips were those of the Holy Spirit.

179. It was said about Zeno: 'While he was in Shiêt, he came out of his cell as if to go the marsh and lost his way. He spent three days and nights walking. When he became tired, he lay on the ground to die. He saw³⁶ a small boy standing before him with bread in his hand and a pitcher of water, saying: 'Rise and eat.' He rose and prayed, thinking that it was a phantasm. The boy said to him: 'You have done well.' He prayed a second and third time and said: 'You have done well' He rose, took and ate. The boy said to him: 'For all your walking you are not far from the cell. Come and follow me.' He then found himself in his cell. The elder said: 'Let us pray.' When the elder entered the cell, the other disappeared.

180. Apa John said: 'One of the elders saw for himself in an out-of-body experience³⁷ that there were three monks standing on the sea shore and a voice came to them from the other shore: "Take for yourselves wings of fire and come to me." Two of them took wings of fire and flew until they reached the other shore. The other one remained behind weeping and crying out. Finally he too was given wings, not of fire but weak and feeble wings. He flew with difficulty and kept

34 I suspect that the 'tome' in question is a papyrus roll, manufactured by glueing cut out sections together. The easier side to write on is the side on which the fibres are horizontal.

35 The Greek has one text and the Coptic another, but rather interestingly both make sense, albeit different sense. I have translated the Coptic, but the inquisitive reader will find an excellent footnote by Chaîne (p. 42 fn. 2) that explains all with admirable clarity.

36 Lit. **αγω εις** 'and behold, '

37 ἑκστασις

sinking and emerging, and with great tribulation he too reached the shore. This is what this generation is like: even if they have received wings, they are not of fire, and scarcely do they receive them than they are weak and feeble.

181. Apa Macarius lived in the great desert, alone and having gone up³⁸ in that place. Below him there were other deserts, in which there were many brothers. The elder was watchful of the road and saw Satan coming in human guise. He passed him wearing a tunic full of holes,³⁹ with a vessel suspended in each one. The great elder said: 'Where are you going?' He said: 'To remind the brothers.' The elder said: 'What are you doing with all these vessels?' He said: 'They are delicacies⁴⁰ for the brothers to taste them. Perhaps one does not please him, and I will give him another; and that does please him, I will give him another, so that everyone is satisfied.' He said this and left. The elder looked carefully at the road until the other turned around. He said: 'Thanks.' The elder said: 'Why?'⁴¹ The other said: 'Because they are all aggressive to me and none of them has tolerated me.' The elder said: 'Do you not have any companions there?' He said: 'Yes, there is one brother I have there. He listens to me. When he sees me, he comes like a boy.' The elder said: 'What is his name?' He said: 'Theopentos.'⁴² He said this and left. Macarius arose and went to the outer⁴³ desert. When the brothers heard this, they went to meet him with palm leaves. Each one prepared himself, saying: 'Perhaps the elder will come and stay with me.' He asked: 'Which monk in this desert is called Theopentos?' When he found him, he went into his cell and was received joyfully. When they began to speak with each other. Macarius asked him how things were. The other replied that they were well because of Macarius' prayers. The elder asked him if thoughts were troubling him. The brother replied that he was well because he was too ashamed to say anything. Macarius said: 'I have been an ascetic for many years and everyone glorifies me. But I too am troubled by the sexual thoughts.'

38 ἀναχωρεῖν. From the Nile Valley it is necessary to go up to the desert.

39 When I first read this passage as a student, the image that came into my mind was that of the Veston Aphrodisiaque created by Salvador Dali in 1936.

40 Coptic **ΑΠΑΡΧΗ**: 'first fruits' and extended meaning 'banquet'. Greek: γεύματα

41 Greek is slightly different. The Coptic phrase

42 Greek: Theopemptos.

43 The 'outer' desert is nearer to the cultivated land than the 'inner' desert.

Theopentios replied: 'Believe me, my father, it troubles me too.' Macarius found a pretext and told him of other thoughts that troubled him until the brother confessed his thoughts. Macarius then said: 'How do you fast?' He said: 'I fast until the 9th hour.' Macarius said: 'Fast until evening and exercise yourself. Say the passages of the Gospels and the rest of the Scriptures you have memorized.⁴⁴ If a thought comes to you, do not look down at all but look all the time to heaven, and God will help you.' The elder gave this instruction to the brother and returned to his own desert. When he looked again, he saw the devil. He said to him: 'Where are you going?' He replied: 'I am going to take care of the brothers' and left. On his return the saint said to him: 'How are they doing?' He replied: 'Not well.' The elder said: 'Why?' He said: 'They are all aggressive and, worst of all, the one who was obedient and a companion, I do not know how he has come to hate me. He does not listen to me and has become more hostile to me than the others. I swore that it would be some time before I came to them again.' That said, he went and left the elder, who went back to his cell.

182. It was said of Apa Macarius that he wanted to comfort the brothers and said: 'A boy who had a demon and his mother once came to this place. The boy said to his mother: "Let us arise and leave this place." She said that she was unable to walk. The boy said: "I will carry you." I was astonished by the villainy of the devil and how he tried to drive them from this place.'

183. He also spoke to the brothers about the devastation of Shiêt,⁴⁵ saying 'If you see a cell being built in the marsh, know that the devastation of Shiêt has come near. If you see the trees, it is before⁴⁶ the cells. If you see small boys, withdraw with your skins and take them with you.'⁴⁷

44 Lit. 'by-hearts'.

45 cf. H.G. Evelyn-White *The monasteries of the Wadi Natrun* (1932): 154ff. Outlying settlements of any sort must have been an easy target for the nomads of the Eastern Sahara. *prqb^cb*

46 The Coptic has to be emended to correspond to the Greek: probably ΜΠΕΜΤΟ ΝΝΕΥΡΙ.

47 Probably a reference to homosexuality or pederasty.

184. Apa Moses was once struggling with sexual thoughts in the desert.⁴⁸ He was greatly troubled so that he was not able to bear it or remain in his cell. He went and spoke to Isidore. The elder begged him to return to his cell, but he refused, saying that he was unable to. He took him up to the roof and said to him: 'Look to the west' and he looked to the west and saw a number of demons disturbed and grieving as if struggling. Apa Isidore said to him: 'Look to the east' and he saw countless numbers of those being glorified.⁴⁹ Apa Isidore said to him: 'These are the ones sent to the saints by the Lord to help them. Those who are in the west, these are ones who struggle with us. There are many with us.' And this is how Apa Moses thanked God, was strengthened and returned to his cell.

185. Apa Moses in Shiêt said: 'If we keep the commandments of our fathers, I will guarantee you before God that barbarians will not come here, but if we do not keep them, the monastery will be devastated.'

186. While the brothers were sitting with him once, he said to them: 'The barbarians are coming to Shiêt today. Rise and flee.' They said to him: 'Will you not flee?' He said to them: 'All these years I have been looking forward to today, so that the word of Christ might be fulfilled: *Everyone who takes a sword will fall by the sword.*'⁵⁰ They said to him: 'Then we will not flee either, but we will die with you.' He said to them: 'This is not my decision. Let each of you decide for himself.' There were seven brothers, and he said to them: 'Look, the barbarians are near the gate.' When they entered, they killed the monks. One of them fled in fear behind the palm leaves and saw seven crowns descending from heaven and crowning them.

187. It was said about Apa Silvanus that he once wanted to go to Syria. His disciple Mark said. 'My father, I do not wish to leave here. And neither do you. Father, I will not let you go. Stay here for three more days.' On the third day they

48 Coptic: Ⲛⲏⲧⲏⲉⲧⲣⲁ. For the association between Moses and the 'rock' cf. Evelyn-White *Wadi Natrun*: 37. The West was traditionally associated with death.

49 This bears a superficial resemblance to the state in pharaonic mortuary literature known as *jm3h*, 'being in state of *3h*'. The nearest English would be something 'transfigured'.

50 Matt. 26, 52

died.

188. Apa John, the one who was exiled by Marcian,⁵¹ said: 'We once went to visit Apa Poimên from Syria. We wanted to ask him about patience. The elder did not know Greek and we had no interpreters. He saw our distress and began to speak Greek, saying: 'The nature of water is soft and that of stone is hard, but if a pitcher is suspended over the stone, dripping down on it, <it wears the stone away>.⁵² This is like the word of God, which is soft, while our heart is hard. If man hears the word of God many times, it causes his heart to open and be afraid of Him.

189. Apa Poimên: 'It is written: *As a hart stays at the spring of water, so also my soul comes to you, God.*⁵³ Whenever harts in the desert eat snakes and the poison enters their system,⁵⁴ they come to the water. If they drink, they cool off from the poison. It is the same with monks in the desert: they burn from the poison of the wicked demons, longing for Saturday and Sunday that they may come to the springs of water, that is, the body and blood of Our Lord to be purified of all the bitterness of evil.'

190. A brother asked him: 'What does it mean *Do not pay back evil with evil* ?'

⁵⁵Apa Poimên said to him: 'Feelings are expressed in four ways: the heart, the face, the tongue and doing evil to him for the evil he has done to you. If you can purify your heart, the gloom will not come to your face towards him. Even if it comes to your face, be careful not to let it leap on to your tongue. If you speak, however, quickly refrain from paying back evil with evil.'

191. This is a story about the blessed Paul the Simple, the disciple of Antonius. He went to a monastery to visit the brothers and help them. After they had spoken, they went into the church for the appointed service. He looked at each of those going to see what their souls are like. He had this gift from God to be able to see what

51 Emperor 450-457

52 The apodosis is clearly missing, so I have supplied it.

53 Ps. 41,2

54 Lit. 'heart'

55 I Thess. 5,15

sort of person each one was, as we see each other's face. And yet those who went in, their faces were radiant and joyful, the angel of each one rejoicing with him. He saw one who was black, his entire body was dark: there was a demon wrapped around him and he was being restrained on all sides and being drawn towards them, with a halter on his nose. The holy angel was far away from him, following him in great sadness. Paul wept and beat his chest with his hand many times. He sat at the door of the church and wept profusely over the one who appeared to him in this way. Those who saw the miraculous matter of the elder and his change of demeanour towards his fellow man, together with the weeping and mourning, they were disturbed and, coaxingly, asked him to tell them what he had seen, afraid that he had seen their all shortcomings, until he did this. They tried to coax him to go into the service with them but he rejected them from him and refused to do it. He sat down outside, in silence and weeping profusely over what he had seen in the vision. After some time they left the church and came out. Again Paul looked closely at each one, knowing how he had gone in. He saw the one he had first seen as black and dark: his entire body was shining as he came out of the church, his face as white as light. The demons followed him, but at a distance, the holy angel attached to him, joyful and glad over the man and jubilant. Paul leapt in joy, crying out and blessing God, saying: 'The unutterable love of God for man, His goodness. O, His holy acts of mercy and His Christhood, which cannot be measured.'

He hastened to offer up on a high altar. He spoke in a loud voice: 'Come and see the works of God how fearful and admirable they are. Come and see the One Who wishes every man to live and come to the knowledge of the truth. Come, let us prostrate ourselves and worship Him and tell Him: 'You alone are able to forgive sins.' They all hastened to hear what he was saying and gathered together. Paul told them what had been revealed to him when going into the church and what happened when they came out. They persuaded that man to tell them what had happened to him and how God had granted him this great change. The man, rebuked by Paul before everyone, revealed it, concealing nothing of his deeds and saying: 'I am a sinner and I have lived in impurity for a long time until now. I have just been to the holy church of God, where I heard the holy Isaiah recited, or rather

God speaking through the prophet: Complete yourselves and purify yourselves. Remove this impurity from your heart before my eyes. Be instructed to do good. Seek after judgement. If your sins are as dark as crimson, I will cause them to be as white as snow. If you are willing to obey me, you will consume every good thing of the earth. ' I said: 'I am impure, the one meant by the prophet here today. ' But rather God speaks to me through him. I am very grieved in my soul and I groan in my heart. I said before God: 'You are my God, You came into the world to save sinners. These things you have now promised to sinners, complete them for me, the worthless sinner. Look, from now on I will render an account to You and agree with You with my whole heart, confessing to You that I will not repeat this wicked deed and I abjure all wrongdoing and from now on I will serve You with a pure conscious. Today there, Lord, I prostrate myself before You. Thus when I came out of church, I made a decision in my own soul not to do wrong from this time forward in the eyes of God.'

When they all heard this, they raised their voices before God: 'As Your works have increased, Lord, You created them wisely. You, Christians, know from the Scriptures and pure revelation the goodness of God towards those who take refuge with Him in humility and how previous sins are purified through repentance, having learned that the promises He has made, he will fulfil them with all good things, without judging anyone for previous wrongdoings. Let us not despair about our salvation. As He has promised through Isaiah the prophet, those who are defiled by sin, He will wash them and clean them like snow and white wool, as well as giving us the goods of heaven. This is how He speaks through the prophet Ezekiel, confirming us in our heart with an oath not to destroy ourselves. The Lord said: *As I live, I do not want the death of the sinner as much as that he should repent and live.*⁵⁶

192. Someone said: 'When the priests come to make the offering, an eagle comes down on to the offering and nobody but the priests sees it. One day a brother asked a deacon for something and he said: "I do not have time". When they went into the offering, the eagle did not come down as usual and the priest said to the deacon:

⁵⁶ Allusion to Ez. 18, 32 perhaps ?

"What is this ? The eagle has not come as usual. Have I done something wrong ? Or have you ? Remove yourself that I may see if it is because of you that he has not come ? If not, then it is because of because of me." When the service was over, the priest said to the deacon: "Tell me what you have done." The deacon said: "I do not know in my heart that I have sinned, except that a brother came to me and asked me for something, and I told him that I had no time." The priest said: "So it was because of you that he did not come, because the brother was annoyed with you." The deacon went and repented to the brother.'

193. Apa Zacharias the disciple of Silvanus once came into him and found in an out-of-body experience, his hands stretched up to heaven. He closed the door and left. He went back at the sixth and ninth hours and found him in the same condition. When the tenth hour came, he knocked. went in and found him resting. He said: 'My father, what is wrong with you today.' He replied: 'My son, today I am ill.' He took his feet and said: 'I will not let you go until you tell me what you have seen.' The elder said to him: 'I was taken up to heaven and I saw the glory of God and I stood there until I was released.'

194. Saint Synklêtikê said: 'Let us be wise like the snakes and simple like the doves. Let us be careful against the traps and the movements of thoughts. For it is said: *Be like the snake so as not to forget the sudden movements⁵⁷ and skills of the devil.* For like is quick to recognize like. The one who is as simple as the dove is manifest through the purity of his actions.

195. Once someone repented and became silent. It happened to him at that moment that he fell against stone and hurt his foot. Blood came forth from it and he became angry and died. The demons came to prevent his soul from going up to heaven. The angel said to them: 'Look at the rock and see his blood which has poured forth because of the Lord.' And when this was said, the soul became free.

57 Matt. 10, 16. Noun made from the verb **κωσεν**, associated with sudden violent movement.

196. Someone said: 'As the elders were once sitting speaking of uplifting matters, one of them looked forth and saw angels praising them and singing to them. When the subject of their conversation changed, the angels removed themselves and foul-smelling pigs came into their midst and soiled them. When they returned to the uplifting matters, the angels gave glory to them.'

197. An elder said: 'It is written that *on the third and on the fourth wrongdoing of Tyre I will not turn from them* and it occurred to him that he should speak of it.⁵⁸ The third thing to do is in the thing itself. The fourth is persuading someone else to do it.'

198. It was said of a great elder in Shiêt that when the brothers were building he would come out happily and put down the foundation and not leave it until it was finished. Once he came out to build a cell. He was very gloomy. The brothers said to him: 'Why are you so gloomy, father ? Why do you grieve ?' He said: 'My children, this place will be devastated. For I once saw a fire burning in Shiêt. The brothers took palm leaves, beat it and extinguished it. It burned a third time and spread to the whole of Shiêt, and they were unable to put it out. That is why I am gloomy and sad.'⁵⁹

199. An elder said: 'It is written *The just will rise like a date palm*,⁶⁰ which means the lofty nature of the good deeds and the sweetness and There is a single heart in the date palm, its entire core being white, like the just who finds himself as a single heart before God, looking at himself and having the light of faith, for the entire work of the just is in his heart. The thorns that pierce are the struggles against the devil.'

200. An elder said: 'The Shunamite⁶¹ received Elisha because she had no companionship among people. It was said that the Shunamite had the face of the soul and Elisha had the face of the Holy Spirit. Whenever the soul removes itself

58 There must be something missing here.

59 There was probably a second fire, but it is not mentioned here. Evelyn-White *Wadi Natrun*: 153 thinks that the fire is a metaphor for heresy or misconduct to be punished by the destruction of Shiêt.

60 Ps. 92, 12

61 2 Kg 4, 8ff.

from the cares of the world and its troubles, the spirit of God dwells with it, and the soul that is barren is able to give birth to other living creatures.'

201. Another one of the fathers said: 'The eyes of the pig take their nature from the creature so as to look at the ground the whole time from necessity, the pig being unable to look up to heaven at all. It is the same with the soul taking delight in passions. Once it has fallen into hedonism and filth, it is difficult for it to look at God or to be concerned with anything worthy of God.'

202. There was a great elder among those who have visions. His testimony was unshakeable : 'The power I saw standing over the baptism, I have seen it also over the monastic garments when one is about to put on the habit.'

203. An elder was once was persuaded to see the future and he said: 'I saw a brother in a monastery in a cell saying his prayers,⁶² and a demon stood outside the door of the cell. While the brother was saying his prayers, the demon was unable to enter the cell. But after he had finished, the demon went in.'

204. It was said of an elder that he begged to see demons, and he was told: 'You do not need to see them.' The elder asked, saying: 'Lord, You can protect me with Your grace', and God opened his eyes. He saw them like bees around the man, grinding their teeth over him, and the angels of God were berating them.

205. One of our fathers said that there were two brothers who came to him. One was a foreigner,⁶³ the other a man of the *chôra*.⁶⁴ The foreigner was a little neglectful, but the Egyptian was very zealous. It happened that the foreigner died, and the elder saw a multitude of angels guiding his soul. When he reached heaven so as to enter there was an interrogation about him. A voice on high said: *The*

62 **μελετα**

63 Lat. *peregrinus*

64 The **χωρα** is normally used of Egypt outside Alexandria and, as far as I know, only by non-Egyptians. This distinction can be seen in the earliest inscriptions of Egypt, e.g. the Canopus Decree (3rd cent. BC) and the description of Alexandria as 'next to' Egypt cf. H.I. Bell 'Alexandria ad Aegyptum' *JRS* 36 (1946):130ff.

*matter is clear, that he was a little neglectful, but because he was a foreigner, open up to him. After this the man of the place⁶⁵ died and his whole family came. The elder saw that there were no angels on either side of him. He was astonished. He fell on his face, saying in the presence of God: 'How did this foreigner acquire glory of this sort even though he was neglectful and this zealous one met with nothing of this sort?' A voice came to him: *This zealous brother, when he was about to die, opened his eyes and saw his fathers, His heart was consoled. But the foreigner, even though neglectful, he saw nobody near him. He lamented and wept. God had mercy on his laments because His nature is merciful. He forgot about the monk's neglect because of his laments and sent angels to console him.**

206. An elder said: 'There was an anchorite in the desert of Tilodj, ⁶⁶ a faithful layman attending to him. There was a man in the rich and impious city. It happened that he died and the whole city mourned for him together, lamps being carried before. The attendant of the anchorite came to the city as he usually did to get bread for him. He found⁶⁷ that a hyena had eaten him and fell on his face before the Lord, saying: "I will not rise until You tell me what these things are. That one receives great glory though he is impious, and this one, who is Your servant day and night, has died in this way." An angel came and said: "The impious has a little good and received it here that he might not find rest there. This anchorite, as a man clothed in every virtue but little sin, has received his reward here that he might be found entirely pure before God in the other life." When he was persuaded, he went, glorifying God for His laws that they are true.'

207. Our holy fathers of Shiêt prophesied about the last generation, saying: 'What will we do?' One of them, a great man called Ischyron, replied: 'We have kept the commandments of God.' They answered and said: 'Those who come after us, what will they do?' He said: 'They will achieve half of what we have achieved.' They said: 'What about the ones who come after them?' He said: 'They have nothing.

Temptation is coming to them. Those who are found free of temptation, they are

65 ΠΡΗΝΤΟΠΟΣ.

66 Lat. Nilopolis. cf. E. Amélinau *La géographie de l'Égypte copte* (1894): 136ff.

67 One must assume that the monk has returned, but neither the Latin nor the Coptic specifies this.

greater than us and our fathers.'

208. Monks came out of their cells at evening and assembled in a single place and began to discuss asceticism, worship of God and what was required to please God. As they were speaking two angels appeared to them before some of the elders among them, with scapulars⁶⁸ in their hands, praising each one who spoke about the kingdom of God. Those who saw the vision remained silent. On the following day they gathered in that place and began to speak about one of the brothers who had sinned. They rebuked him. A foul-smelling utterly filthy pig appeared to the elders. Those who saw the vision, when they knew of the sin, told the brothers of the glory from the angels and the likeness of the pig.

209. Our fathers said: 'It is necessary for each to assign to himself the sin of his neighbour so that he might pray for him until he turns once again to God by suffering with him and that he might rejoice and his pain might stop. For it is a single body which all men have and this same soul, and the suffering is simulated lest it too one day be afflicted. For it is written: *We are all one body in Christ*⁶⁹ and *The multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul*⁷⁰ and the embrace of the church is revealed in this.

210. One of the elders told this story.

There was a virgin who grew old and advanced in the fear of God. I asked her about the manner of her anachoresis. She sighed and said: 'My companion, my father was a gentle man in his manner, but he was weak and sickly. He lived much of the time in seclusion and many of those in the town had little contact with him, as he spent his time only on his land where he was busy. When he felt well, he gathered the fruits of his land in righteousness. But most of his life he spent in bed, ill. He was silent for much of the time so that those who did not know him thought that he was dumb. My mother was quite different from this and more meddlesome than anyone. She had words with everyone and was at odds with everyone so that people

68 ἐπωμίς

69 Rom. 12, 5

70 Acts 4, 32

said her entire body was a tongue. She quarrelled with everyone the whole time, destroying herself in drunkenness by drinking wine with ignorant men and indulging her sexual needs like a whore. Though we were well off, it was never enough for us, for my sick father let her take charge of our affairs. Her lewdness was such that there very few in the town who escaped her advances. She was never ill and remained healthy until the day she died. But my father was ill and suffered for much of the time until he died, whereupon the weather became troubled. There was rain and lightning and thunder, and there was much disturbance. There was neither night nor day when it did not rain for three days. My father lay on his bed for three days unburied so that all the people of the town shook their heads, wondering, because they had all forgotten him because of the great suffering and they said: "He is an enemy of God and the earth will not receive him for burial." But lest his body decay in the house and prevent us from entering, despite the bad weather and heavy rain, we buried him as far as we were able to. But my mother became even more shameless and began to subject her body to joyless⁷¹ fornication. She gave herself over to impurity and sensuality. I, still young, put these things behind me. When she died, I was almost buried with her, as I thought, because a large burial shroud was zealously wrapped around her as if the air was being buried with her. After her death I became a young woman and thoughts of desire stirred within me. It happened at the time of evening that I began to reflect and I thought about what sort of life I would choose to lead. My father's life was gentle, mild and modest. But I also thought about the other aspect, that there was nothing good in his life, but that he spent all of his time in pain and suffering until he pined away and died in pain, and the earth did not receive his body with joy. If he was good before God in that way of living, why did he receive so much suffering? I wondered if the life of my mother was better? If I should give myself over to fornication, defilement and make my body impure. For my mother tried every form of wickedness and (there was nothing) she did not:⁷² she was constantly drunk and in good health, having died in a state of ease. So, I will do as my mother did. It is better not to deny the

71 Lit. 'no sweetness' (Μῆζλοσ)

72 ἸΠΠΕΤΑΜΑΛΥ ΓΑΡ ΚΑΖΩΒ ΕΦΖΟΟΥ ΝΣΩΣ ἸΠΠΕΣΑΛΥ 'my mother did not neglect any wicked deed, she not having done it'

things we have seen than to believe⁷³ those which we have known only from revelation. I am a wretch and I gave myself up to a wicked life of this sort. When evening came, I was overcome by sleep. Someone stood over me, with a large body and terrifying face, who made me afraid with his appearance. Angry⁷⁴ in his form, his voice roughly asking me to tell him what I had been thinking of. Afraid of his face and form, I did not dare to look at him. He cried out in a loud voice, ordering me to say the resolutions that I had made. Out of fear I answered. Knowing all my thoughts, I said: "I know nothing." He reminded me, as I denied this, and told me everything I had thought about. I turned, flattering and begging him to make me worthy of forgiveness and about the excuse I had thought of."⁷⁵ He said to me: "Come and see them both again, your mother and father. Then choose the life you wish for." He took my hand and led me to a large field, with paradise in it and many trees of all sorts and beauty that defied description. He took me to the holy place. My father came to meet me, embraced me and kissed me on the mouth, saying: "My daughter, be among those who are good." I embraced him, pleading with him to let me stay with him. He said: "Now it is not possible. But if you follow my ways willingly, you will soon be brought here." As I was begging him that I might stay with him, the one who had led me to that place seized me and said: "Come and see your mother too, being burned in the fire that you might know what the good and profitable life is and choose it for yourself." He placed me above a dark house that was all smoke, full of the grinding of teeth and tribulation. He pointed out to me an oven of fire with its flames licking upwards and boiling hot, some very fearful creatures standing upon it. I looked down and saw my mother in the oven submerged to her neck, her teeth chattering and striking each other, as she was being burned up by the fire and consumed by numerous worms. When she saw me, she cried out in a lament, calling me: "My daughter, woe is me from my own deeds, woe is me from the things I have done, for I was indifferent to seemliness and lived a life of fornication and adultery. I did not believe that I would be punished. I did not take my drunkenness and fornication into account that they would be a torture

73 This may be the meaning of the Latin: *melius enim propriis oculis credere his quae manifesta cognita sunt et nihil praemittere*. We can only guess what the Greek original said. It may be necessary to read **ἐμπίστευε** rather than **ἐανπίστευε**

74 Typographical error: **ἐμπίστ**

75 Latin: *et causam ei narrabam huiusmodi cogitatus* 'and I told him the reason for this sort of thinking'.

for me. So, because of a few pleasures I have received these punishments and this is retribution for the little bit of luxury I had, and I am overwhelmed by a judgement like this. In return for the contempt I showed to God, look, how great the payment in punishment. Ceaseless woes are mine. But it is now time for you to help me, my daughter. Remember the nourishments⁷⁶ with which I suckled you. Now, if I have ever done a good thing, do one for me. Have pity on me, your mother, who am being burned in the fire and being destroyed by it. Have pity on me, your mother, who is being tortured in this way. Be merciful to me, my daughter, and give me a hand and bring me forth from this place." But I forgot myself⁷⁷ to do this because of those standing in that place. Again she cried out, weeping: "My daughter, help me and do not ignore the tears of your mother. Think of the birth pains and do not ignore me that I might die in the fire of Gehenna." I, because of her tears and her voice, my human heart became sad, and I cried out moaning. Those in the house awoke and lit the fire, looking for the cause of the moaning. I told them what had been revealed to me and, through the indescribable love of God for man, I resolved to remain singleminded and chose for myself to love the life of my father because the punishments set for those who chose to live badly.' The blessed virgin said these things because of the things she had seen in the vision. She did great works of good, saying that the wicked deeds and the good deeds will be greatly punished. For this reason let us choose, in our own counsel, to be chosen and find a way to be blessed.

211. That elder also spoke about another bishop so that we might receive greater encouragement from him and find our own salvation. A bishop, who was with us, was told⁷⁸, as the bishop himself said,⁷⁹ that there were two women of the faith, who were married,⁸⁰ but did not live modestly. The bishop was vexed by what was said about them. He looked concerning⁸¹ others in this state for the sake of divine

76 Read **ϣⲁⲛⲱ**: I take this word to be related to the following verb **ϣⲁⲛⲱ**

77 **ⲱⲃⲱ**: in the sense of 'disobey' (Crum 518b). Its pharaonic word *3bh* means 'to mix, be mixed', which seems to have generated the sense of 'forget' and, by extension, the meaning here. Clearly a semantically mobile word.

78 I have consulted the Latin to make sense of this: **ⲉⲗⲁⲭⲱⲟⲟϥ ⲛⲁⲛ ⲉⲓⲧⲛⲱⲓⲉⲡⲓⲕⲟⲡⲓϥ** has to be read **ⲉⲗⲁⲭⲱⲟⲟϥ ⲛⲱⲓⲉⲡⲓⲕⲟⲡⲟϥ**. The writer has probably used the Coptic preposition **ⲉⲓⲧⲛ** because it is used to construct the passive used in the Latin and probably translated from the Greek: *nuntiabatur a quibusdam episcopo*

79 Latin: *ipse episcopus*

80 **ⲉⲗⲉⲓⲧⲉⲣⲟϥ** can mean 'free, married': Latin describes them *saecularium matronarum mulieres fideles*

81 Latin: *suspiciatus*. Coptic: **ⲟⲩⲱⲧⲉ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ**, a combination that I cannot find in Crum 837b. The Latin seems to yield good sense: 'suspecting that there might be others of this sort, he turned to pray to God, asking to be made certain,

consolation. He went there, asking to know the truth and the facts, and he got both. For after those who went into the holy mysteries had received holy and fearful communion, he saw their souls from their faces and what sins each one was subject to. He saw the faces of the sinners, like coals. Some of them, he saw, had faces that burned, their eyes red and bloodshot; others had shining faces, their garments white; the remainder, as they were about to partake of the body of the Lord, they were scorched and burned. But some became like light that went into their mouth and caused their entire body to light up. Some of them were about to choose for themselves the life of monasticism and these were in the married state. He then spoke also to the women who had come to receive (the Eucharist), giving it to them, that he might know what sort of women they were in their soul. He saw this same type as in these others who were black and red. Meanwhile, those two women who had been accused before the father,⁸² these for whose sake the bishop had given himself over to prayer in this way. And he saw them about to make their way from the holy mysteries of Christ, like ones whose faces were shining and who were glorified and whose garments were white. Having partaken of the holy mysteries of Christ, they had become like creatures shining with light. When he turned again to pray before God to know the things that had been revealed through his prayer like those that had been revealed in their ways,⁸³ an angel of God stood with him and ordered him to ask him about each one. The holy bishop then asked⁸⁴ about the two women: 'Is the backbiting about them true or a lie?' The angel said: 'All the things said against them are true.' The bishop said to the angel: 'How is it that when they partook of the holy mysteries their faces shone and their garments were white and their gait was very bright?'⁸⁵ The angel said: 'Whereas⁸⁶ they have repented for what they have done and have removed themselves from tears and sighs and, having given an account via the mysteries that they will be charitable to the poor, have partaken of the holy mysteries and promised not to fall into these wicked

and he was'.

82 ΠΑΠΑΣ

83 Latin: *et discere cupiens modum revelationum, quae ei demonstratae fuerant*. The two versions diverge at this point and, in the absence of the Greek, it is difficult to know what has happened.

84 Verb is missing in Coptic. Latin: *continuo sciscitabatur*.

85 Coptic: ΕΥΝΟΣ ἸΜΑΤΕΠΕ 'it being very great'.

86 What follows this word (ΕΠΙΔΗ) is similar to the relatively elaborate preamble of a legal text, the following main clause being introduced by ΕΤΒΕΠΑΙ.

deeds again if they find forgiveness for their previous sins and receive it, for this reason this holy change has happened to them that they have removed themselves from the just deserts of their sins and have since become wholesome in modesty, righteousness and piety.' The bishop was astonished and said: 'Because of the change of the women I am amazed. For this has often happened, but (it is) the gift of God, Who does not bring upon them punishments at the time of sin but makes them worthy of this great grace.' The angel replied: 'You wonder at this. Justifiably you wonder. For you are human. But the Lord of us all is good and loves humanity. Everyone who abandons sin and makes obeisance to him, revealing their whole heart, not only does He not send them to be punished but He also takes His anger away from them and makes them worthy of glory. For this is how God loved the world so that He sent His only Son and gave Him for their sake, the One Who chose to die of His own accord for their sake, when they were still being hostile. In particular, He chooses to make them his servants if they repent of their sins which they have committed. He cancels their punishments and gives them enjoyment of the good things which will be with Him prepared. Know therefore⁸⁷ that no sin of man will prevail over the God's love of man, but it is God alone Who will cause many to reject through repentance the previous sins that he has committed For God loves man and knows the weakness of man and the power of the passions and the power of the devil and his wrongdoing. People fall into sin, repent and He forgives them like children. And He is patient when He looks at their good works. For if they repent and continue to look up at Him in His goodness, He takes trouble with them as weak ones. And then He relaxes their punishment and grants them the good things reserved for the just.' The bishop replied and said to the angel: 'Please tell us also the change of their faces: to what sort of sins each of them was abandoned that I might know this too and become a stranger to all ignorance.' The angel said: 'Those whose faces are shining, they live joyfully in seemliness, purity,

87 To express the imperative of a verb in the stative/qualitative form, it is normal to use the imperative of **ϣⲱⲡⲉ** and the circumstantial, e.g. Lk 12, 40: **ϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉⲧⲉⲧⲛⲥⲃⲧⲱⲧ** (Sahidic)/**ϣⲱⲡⲓ ⲉⲣⲉⲧⲛⲥⲃⲧⲱⲧ** (Bohairic), but this is not the case with **ϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉⲕⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ** (unless one understands the verb itself as having a stative meaning), and a literal version would be 'Be therefore knowing'. The Latin verb used here is *scito*, sometimes called the Second Imperative, which is often used to mean something like 'you should know, remember', and I think this is what the Coptic expresses here.

patient and merciful righteousness. Those who have black faces are instruments⁸⁸ of fornication and sexual desire and every sort of polluted luxury. Those whose colour is blood red, they live in fornication and injustice.' The angel also said to him: 'Help them therefore now, if you love their salvation. For this is what has been given to you through your prayers that you may see and know the sins of those you teach to be your disciples through your teachings and prayers that you may cause them chosen through the repentance of the One Who gave Himself for them, died for them and rose, Jesus Christ Our Lord. Every power therefore and all zeal which you have before Christ, reveal them by caring for them that you may turn them from sin towards God, persuading them that the one who does not repent is trapped in sin.⁸⁹ Do not therefore cause them to be without faith in their own salvation. For it is up to them⁹⁰ to repent and to turn to God that they might receive the salvation of their souls and the enjoyment of good things. You too will receive a great reward when you have risen to your Lord, the One Who came from heaven and and walked on earth for the salvation of mankind.'

88 Lit. 'workers'

89 The Latin is quite different here.

90 Coptic: ΠΑΙ ΓΑΡ ΦΘΟΠ ΝΑΥ ΕΤΡΕΥΜΕΤΑΝΟΙ ... The Coptic translator has probably misunderstood the Greek, which like the Latin *paenitentibus quidem illis ... salus erit*. may have had a dative, hence the Coptic ΦΘΟΠ ΝΑΥ. On the other hand, it might be an exercise in rendering the sense without resorting to a literal translation.