

Colophons of Coptic Manuscripts

Part Two: Upper Egypt

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This article contains translations of texts 100 to 120 published in A. van Lantschoot *Receuil des Colophons des Manuscrits Coptes* (1929) that come from various places in Upper Egypt. Several volumes were made for one of the Shenoute monasteries, perhaps the White Monastery.¹

The intention of this article is to give a running translation of the colophon texts. For more detailed information the work of Lantschoot is to be consulted, in particular his notes on pp. 66 to 84, which I have from time to time cited. They contain references to works by various scholars to which I have no access.

The tense known as the 3rd Fut. is often used in these texts. I have translated it as the optative 'may . . .' and not the standard 'will'.

The two most common abbreviations are:

A(nno)M(artyrum)=AD 284

A(nno) H(ijrae)=AD 622.

Months.

The following list is taken from W. Till *Koptische Grammatik* (1961) pp. 87ff., a list of Coptic months with their modern western equivalents in lower case Roman numerals. The names given below are 'standardized' Sahidic versions, and there are several variants of each name, e.g. ⲪⲟⲟϮ/ⲪⲟⲪ, as will be seen in the texts themselves.

ⲪⲟⲟϮ	29 viii
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¹ Current archaeological work at the White Monastery site has uncovered a room in the NE part of the church designated as the Candle Room, in which a certain amount of written and writing material has been found, cf. <http://egyptology.yale.edu/current-expeditions/yale-monastic-archaeology-project-south-sohag/white-monastery/candle-room-manuscript-fragments>

ΠΑΟΠΕ	28 ix
ΖΑΘΩΡ	28 x
ΚΟΙΑΖΚ	27 xi
ΤΩΒΕ	27 xii
ἸΩΡ	26 i
ΠΑΡἸΖΟΤἸ	25 ii
ΠΑΡΜΟΥΤΕ	27 iii
ΠΑΨΟΝC	26 iv
ΠΑΩΝΕ	26 v
ΕΠΗΠ	25 vi
ΜΕCΟΡΕ	25 vii

100. BM Or. 3581 B(70)r

[... x lines missing ...] times in heavenly Jerusalem, the city of all the just. Amen. So be it. So be it. Amen.

I myself, the lowly and wretched calligrapher, George, the son of the Holy Church, the psalmist, have had the temerity to write this book.

AH 427/AM 752

...² joy and rejoicing and jubilation of our God-loving, *agapê*-loving³ and church-loving brother. Our Lord knows his name, the one who gave this ancient book to the church of our father Apa Shenoute that He⁴ might save him from the snares of Satan through the prayers of the prophet Moses: "Anyone who removes this book from the monastery of Apa Shenoute, God will bring upon him all the curses that in the law and will take away his portion of the Tree of Life. Amen."

101. Cairo Museum no. 9296

2 I do not know how to read this word: **σἰτοζc**. The second part looks 'anoint'. It occurs in a context similar to that in the term **ζετq** occurs in the Fayyum texts.

3 Coptic **ΜΑΙΑΓΑΠΗ**: later combined with **ΜΑΙΠΡΟCΦΟΡΑ**. For the wide range of meanings of the word cf. G.W.H. Lampe *Patristic Greek Lexicon* (1961) p. 8

4 I understand the pronoun to refer to the Lord and not Shenoute.

recto

[. . . x lines missing . . .] Only-begotten Son of the Father, Who gave His holy blood for the salvation of the whole world, the One Who received to Himself the gifts and sacrifices of áll the saints in whom He has ever been pleased. In this way, Lord, may you receive to yourself this gift for which the God-loving brothers assumed the responsibility of writing⁵ and depositing among them so that it might be read in the monastery [. . . x lines missing . . .] and that they might find solace and comfort of life and benefit for their souls and the souls of those who hear its words of life.

And they too, may the good God mark out their path in this life and, when they die, may they obtain the good things of the kingdom of heaven together with all the saints who have pleased Him from eternity. So be it. Amen.

Remember me too in love, my ancient⁶ fathers. Lord, bless Pouttôr,⁷ for he acquired the book from Al Ghuzz⁸ and gave it to his monastery, that is Apa Shenoute.

verso

[. . . x lines missing . . .] I this wretch and sinner that He might not hold me to account for my sins that I have committed before His fearful tribunal at the time when He gives to each according to his. So be it. Amen.

. . .iou.⁹ AM 764/AH 437. Christ being king over us Christians, glory to Him forever.

Cross: Jesus Christ

102. Paris Copte 129¹² fol. 42 and French Institute, Cairo fr. 3

recto

The great *Life of our Father Pachomius the archimandrite* is complete.

5 Coptic uses a conjugation prefix (ϣΑΝΤΕ), which often means 'until' but can also mean 'so that' cf. W. Till *Koptische Grammatik* (1961) p. 152

6 Coptic: ⲙⲏⲛⲁϥ. I can make little sense of the word as it stands, but removal of the first letter yields an adjective.

7 Two possibilities for this name: Victor or Pettêrios.

8 According to Abu Salih *Churches and Monasteries of Egypt* (ed. and tr. B.T.A Evetts, 1895) pp. 265ff, this group of people stole the body of Shenoute from the monastery at Atripe. Abu Salih names this people, 21 times in fact, in connection with the Kurds (and Salah ed Din).

9 Lantschoot cites a suggestion of Munier to the effect that this is an abbreviation of the name 'Jesus'

Please remember me and pray for me in love, my clerical fathers, everyone who reads this book, I the greatest sinner on earth, Sisinnius, the one unworthy of the name deacon. and say: "May The Lord be merciful to this wretch", so that through your holy prayers and the movement of your pure lips the Lord might forgive me the sea of my many sins and grant me an upright life from now on and be merciful to me on the day of necessity, that day full of grief and sighs. So be it. Amen.

Blessed is the one You have chosen and received to Yourself. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, His will¹⁰ being in the commandments. less us, our God . . .¹¹

verso

This good thing has happened through Ptoukes,¹² who bought this *Life* of our father Pachomius through his own labours and gave it to the monastery of Apa Shenoute for the salvation of his soul.

Lord Jesus Christ Son of the living God, bless and preserve our God-loving brother, Abu Nasser, the son [. . .], the one of Tampeti¹³ in the district of Pemje (Oxyrhynchus).. He bought this book with his own money from the Persians¹⁴ at the time when God brought them against Egyptians and they destroyed their land and all their property, took away their women and children and became masters of the land from Rakote to Pilak.¹⁵ For on the day they entered Egypt, Mechir 2 AM 883, they committed great acts of violence in the country and and slaughtered many Christians and ravaged¹⁶ the entire land of Egypt because of the excessive sinning committed by the Egyptians.

After this God thought of His Christian people and His bride the Church and scattered them and brought them forth from Egypt in the eighth of the month, that is the month of Thoth. For

10 Coptic: **ⲟⲩⲱⲛ** can also mean 'love'. Possible allusion to I John 5,3 ?

11 There are only two letters missing in the next line **ⲙⲀⲚⲀⲢⲞⲤⲌ** [- ·]ⲞⲒⲀ, but I can make no sense of it

12 Suggestion of Crum cited in Lantschoot's note: the *dux*.

13 According to Lantschoot also called **ⲧⲀⲙⲢⲞⲧⲏ**, on which cf. E. Amélineau *Géographie d'Égypte* (1893) p.479

14 As Lantschoot points out at some length the Ghuzz (and Kurds), mentioned in the previous colophon, are probably meant. Whether the confusion is due to the ignorance or indifference of the writer cannot be determined.

15 Rakote is the only name Egyptians writing Coptic used of Alexandria: it is the name of a small town that was on the site of what became the well-known Greek metropolis. Pilak ('the corner') is the name of an island south of Aswan.

16 Vb **ⲉⲣⲓⲧ**, attested in earlier stages of the language, means 'glean'. It is comparable with the verbal phrase 'mop up' used in the military sense. The idea of this as divine retribution is paralleled in other cultures, e.g. Gildas making the moral laxity of the British the reason for easy success of German 'invaders' in the 5th cent. AD or Wulfstan's homily *Sermo ad Anglos* (1016), blaming the moral laxity of the English for the Viking raids.

this reason the man whose name we have mentioned bought this book of your father Pachomius and sent it to his monastery so that our father Pachomius might intercede with Christ the king on his behalf and bless¹⁷ him in this world with his children and all his property and that, when he leaves this world, He might tear up the record of his sins and reward his vow a hundredfold in heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the just and write his name in the Book of Life so that he might rejoice with the saints. Amen.

This day Thoth 15 AM 889/AH 560. It is the lowly sinner, the deacon Peqôsh of the same district, who writes. Remember me.

103. Manchester (John Rylands Library) Coptic ms. 112 v

With God. God who received to Himself the gifts of Abel the just and the sacrifice of our father Abraham and the two mites¹⁸ of the widow and the incense of Aaron, may He receive this gift from the God-loving brother who loves the *agapê* and the offering, for the production of which he has been responsible with his own means, which he produced and gave to the Christ-loving church of Edfu, which is [. . .] for the salvation [. . . rest is missing . . .]

104. Paris Copte 132¹ fol. 69 and 71

[Unspecified text missing]¹⁹ Apa Abraham the blessed priest who is called Pousheer. May the Lord increase his years and keep a lasting peace in these monasteries in all his days and everyone under his authority and watch over them and protect them through the prayers of our father Apa Shenoute and give them a hand in everything for what is good, the Lord Jesus Christ being king over us all, and strengthen us in this orthodox faith and forgive us our many sins. So be it. Amen. This day Paône 7 AM 906.²⁰

17 Till *Gramm.* p. 162 describes this form of the conjugation prefix as 'vulgär'.

18 KJV of Mk 12, 42: 'two mites, which make a farthing' and Vulgate 'duo minuta quod est quadrans'. The British farthing, no longer in use, was the smallest coin, the fourth part of a penny, and appropriately enough bore the figure of a wren, the smallest bird, on its reverse.

19 Something must be missing here. The particle **ⲛⲟⲓ-** introduces the nominal subject of a verb that refers back to a pronominal subject: **ⲁⲒⲠⲟⲣⲧⲣ ⲛⲟⲓⲗⲁⲅⲁⲣⲓⲁⲥ** ('he was disturbed, Zachary') enables the Coptic translator of Lk. 1, 12 to follow the word order of the Greek *ἐταράχθη Ζαχαρίας*. Something of the sort can still be heard in the spoken language of many parts of the North of England. For example, 'She's a good dancer is Katy', cited in <http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/sounds/regional-voices/grammatical-variation/>

20 In both 'numerals' and words.

Bless me. Forgive me. Pray for me in love. Do not hold me to account for my errors.²¹ For I am a pupil at the lower end of all training. I am not skilled, for I have made many errors in what I have done. I have written in accordance with poverty and my training. Look, I make a *metanoia*. Pray to the Lord for me that He might illuminate me in my poverty. Woe to me that there is a time when I am not,²² that the hand is incapable and writing comes to a standstill. Look, I make a *metanoia* at the shoes of your feet. Everyone who reads this book²³, let him say in his love: 'May you give a decorous ending and forgive him his sins', for I am the worst sinner on earth. Amen.

May he have mercy on me and forgive me sins.

Nine hundred and six.

105. Turin Museum endpaper recto

This book belongs to the catholic church of Tin²⁴ in peace of God. Amen. I George the lowly reader, pray for me in love. Amen. Hathor 19 indiction 3.

Chapter 1: Encomium on St Pjôôre of Jinjêb

Chapter 2: Encomium on St Moses of Sebelakê and his sister

Chapter 3: Encomium of Psate of Psoi

Chapter 4: Teaching of Apa Sabinus on Pahbeu and Ouoeienin

Chapter 5: Encomium on the great struggle that happened in Shên²⁵

Chapter 6: Encomium on Apa Dioscorus and Apa Asclepius

Chapter 7: Encomium on the miracles of St Kôre

Chapter 8: Encomium on St Peter the head of the Church

Chapter 9: Second encomium on the head of the Church

Chapter 10: Encomium on the Apostle Paul

Chapter 11: Second encomium on the Apostle Paul

Chapter 12: Martyrdom of St Peter

21 Copying errors

22 An attempt at a literal rendering. I am not sure that I understand the meaning.

23 Lit, 'remembrance' cf. W.E. Crum *Coptic Dictionary* 200b.

24 Gk. Thinis, the 'capital' of pre-dynastic and early dynastic Egypt.

25 Synod of the Oak (403), in which John Chrysostom was impugned by Theophilus of Alexandria, who apparently hatched a plot against John at a house outside Constantinople called 'At the Oak'. Coptic **ϩHN** means 'tree'. The Coptic description of **ΛΓΩΝ** sounds more appropriate than 'synod'.

Chapter13: Martyrdom of the blessed Apa Jôôre of Jinjêb

Chapter14: Martyrdom of Apa Paul the shepherd

The contents of this book.²⁶

106. Turin Museum, a folio, recto

This is the vow for the realization of which NN, female, is responsible. The Lord God knows their names.²⁷ She gave it to the monastery of St John the Baptist of Tin for the salvation of her soul and her late husband and her children and all her people, each one by name, so that God and St John will bless them and their whole farm and household, according to the blessing of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in peace. Amen.

107. BM Or. 6780

fol. 17v

I John the lowly, the priest and son of Colluthus of the monastery of Mercurius and steward of the Archangel Gabriel. As with the prayers of intercession ²⁸it was written in Paremhotep 4, indiction²⁹ AM 609, AH 363.

fol. 18r

Through the zeal and providence . . . God-loving brother Sisinnius, son of the late Philotheus, sailing master, produced this book through his own labours. He deposited it in the church of the Archangel Gabriel of Esna³⁰ so that the God of the archangel Gabriel and Our Lady the Virgin and the carpenter elder³¹ might bless him and his wife and his children and all his

26 Lantschoot has notes on some of these texts.

27 Presumably refers to the woman and her family.

28 Gk ὁπὸς πρεσβύτες εὐχαίς

29 The year is not given, but it can be calculated as year 2 of the 46th cycle

30 The Coptic name is Ⲭⲏⲏ, derived from the pharaonic name, and the Greek Laton polis(atopolis

31 This curious expression seems at first to refer to Joseph the husband of Mary. Lantschoot suggests John of Siut (Lycopolis), a 4th cent. recluse who is also the patron saint of carpenters, as another possible referent. In the case of the former it seems to be a not entirely appropriate description; in the case of the latter, I do not understand why he should be mentioned here.

property, as He blessed Eutropius and his wife Caesaria³² and our father the Patriarch Abraham with Sara and Isaac and Rebecca and Leah and Rachel and bless him like Dorothe and Theopistês and save him in his orthodox faith until the last breath, for he is the only one in whom we hope and bless everything he does and make him worthy to hear the voice full of joy that says: "Come to me, those blessed of my father and inherit the kingdom that has been prepared for you from the foundation of the world." So be it. Amen.

108. BM Or. 7022 fol. 59v

Through the zeal and providence of the most God-loving deacon Pourot³³: he is responsible for the production of this book and gave it to the church of St Mercurius of Edfu, Apollonia in the language of the Alexandrians.³⁴ Lord, preserve the life and safety of the revered God-loving brother, Pourot and make him worthy of the rejoicing of heaven and perfect him in the angelic life³⁵ that he has assumed, like our forefathers in the cenobitic life, that he might bring his blessing upon us and all the saints. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ our true God in truth, may He preserve the life and safety of the most God-revering archpresbyter, Apa Abraham, the superior and administrator of the monastery of St Mercurius of Edfu and bring His blessing upon us. Lord, preserve the life and safety of all the fathers and sons of the monastery and let him make me worthy of their blessings and give a heartfelt love³⁶ that they may pray for me before our king Christ that He might forgive me my many sins and have mercy on me when I die.³⁷

32 Lantschoot cites, in addition to M 583, a review by Crum's review in *Journal of Theological Studies* 98 (1924) p. 201, to which I have no access.

33 Name means 'joy'

34 An interesting way of referring to Greek. The Greek settlers in Egypt, whose relatively small number was augmented considerably from the 6th BC settlement at Naucratis to the large-scale settlements of the 3rd cent. BC Ptolemies, gave Greek names to Egyptian gods and towns. The patron deity of Edfu was Horus, 'identified' by the Greeks with Apollo, hence the name Apollonia or Apollinopolis.

35 Usually a reference to monasticism.

36 Hybrid: ἀγάπη (love) and καρδιά (heart). It appears also, according to Lantschoot, in a publication by Crum 'Inscriptions from Shenoute's monastery' *Journal of Theological Studies* 5 (1904) pp. 552-569, to which I have no access.

37 Lit. 'on the day of my visit'.

I Joseph the lowly wretch, son of the late Sisinnius, the archdeacon of the catholic church of St John the Baptist in the monastery of Esna. The Lord will give him rest.

(Greek) Sokratôr the lowly deacon, son of Joseph the deacon, pray for me. The wretched . . .³⁸
Amen.

Written Parmoute 12 AM 697

109. BM Or. 7022 fol. 26r

Joseph the lowly deacon, son of the late Sisinnius, archdeacon of the church of St John the Prodromus and Baptist of the city of Laton, pray for me, the wretched sinner. Amen.³⁹

110. BM Or. 7025

fol. 32v

Remember me in love, everyone who reads this book, that God might forgive me my many sins.
I Theopistos the lowly.

Written Thoth 12 indiction 10 AM 698

fol. 33r

With God. Through the zeal and providence of our God-loving revered brother Chael, son of the late Stephen, the island farmer:⁴⁰ he is responsible for the production of this little book through his own labours and gave it to the monastery of St Mercurius for the salvation of his soul that they will read about ⁴¹Abbaton the angel of the death and that St Mercurius might call upon the Lord on his behalf that He might bless him in this world and save him from all the snares of the devil and evil men and help him to good in everything and, when he departs from this life, that the archangel Abbaton may find favour on his behalf before God that He might forgive him his sins. So be it. Amen,

111. BM 7024 fol. 49v

Through the zeal and providence of the God-loving brother Chael, the son of late Stephen the

38 Gk word ? ΒΑΡΑΧΣC. A word such as ΕΛΛΗCΤOC would make some sense, but it is difficult to extract that reading.

39 The 'language' of this fragment is probably best described as an attempt to write a formulaic passage of Greek in 'Coptic' script.

40 Coptic: ΠΟΥΘΕΙ ΜΜΟΥΙ probably has to be understood in this or a similar way cf. CD 160b. I have seen small plots of land in the Nile under cultivation, but by this time of course the Nile had long since stopped flooding completely.

41 For the phrase ΩΨ ΕΠΡΑΝ cf. Crum Dictionary 534a.

island farmer, the man of the plain which is north ⁴²of Esna: he is responsible for the production of this book through his own labour and gave it to the monastery of Mercurius at Edfu for the salvation to provide reading material about St John and Apa Pachomius so that Mercurius the General and victorious martyr, John the Baptist and forerunner of Christ and Apa Pachomius the archimandrite might call upon Christ on his behalf and bless him in this world and save him from the snares of the devil and wicked people and assist him in all things towards good. After the completion therefore of this life he will be worthy to have his sins forgiven and to receive his inheritance together with all the saints. So be it. Amen.

Remember me, Theopistos, the lowly deacon, the son of Severus the archpresbyter of the monastery of St Mercurius at Esna. I wrote this book with my hand. Pray for me that God might forgive me my many sins, for they are indeed numerous. So be it.

(Greek)

Written Emshir 16 indiction 15 AM 703 AH 376

Abba Nicodemus the lowly . . . Apollonia . . . Thebes . . . Philae. Amen

111a BM 7024 endpaper

The text contains passages written by various people who name themselves in the 1st person:

I, Cosmas/I, Mercurius/I, Apa Kire of Patrike:

The Cosmas text has the date AM 750.

The Mercurius text AM 749

The Kire text is translated here:

I, Apa Kire the pupil and son (?) of Theodore of Patrike, pray for me.

Remember me, my fathers and brothers and everyone who reads this book, and pray to the good God on my behalf to forgive a portion of my sins, for there are very many of them, indeed more than the hairs ⁴³on my head. I, the lowly Apa Kire, I Apa Kire the son of the late⁴⁴

42 One would expect 'south'

43 Lit. 'growth' (ογϖ)

44 Cryptographic writing

Theodore of Patrike. Forgive me.

Written Thoth 16 AM 741 AH 414

112. BM Or. 7021 fol. 49

recto

(Greek) Written Epip 19 indiction 15 AM 703

verso

Through the zeal and providence of our God-loving revered brother Sirê, son of the late Phêu, resident of the plain of Tarês⁴⁵ of Esna in the village called Pkourosê. He produced the book with his own labours and gave it to the monastery of the archangel Michael at Edfu so that the God of the archangel might bless him and his wife, his children, his animals and all his property. When he departs from this life, may he be worthy to hear the voice full of joy: "Come, those who are blessed of my Father, and inherit the kingdom that has been prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Amen. So be it.

112. BM Or. 7021 fol. 50

With God. Remember me in love, everyone who reads this book, and pray to the Lord God of the archangel Michael for me that He might forgive me my many sins, me the lowly Victor son of the late Mercurius deacon of St Mercurius the General of Esna. I wrote this book with my own hand. Pray for me that God might give me success from now on and bring my life to a Christian end and have mercy on me at His fearful tribunal on the day of the Judgement of Truth. Amen. So be it for me and the entire Christian people.

('Greek' in Coptic letters)

⁴⁵ Probably 'the one of the south'. Pkourosê is attested, according to Lantschoot, in W.E. Crum and others *Epiphanius* (1926) vol. 1 p. 120

Greetings, leading angel Michael, the angel, the holy archistrategus [. . .] For [. . .] of the throne . . . length . . . standing by . . . fill heavens . . . ranks⁴⁶

113. BM Or. 7029

fol. 76

recto

Through the zeal and providence of the devout deacon, whose name is known to God: he is responsible for the production of this book through his own labours, produced it and gave it to the monastery of Haron at Edfu so that the God of the just and blessed Apa Haron and the patriarch and apostolic Athanasius the archbishop and the archangel Michael will bless our brother with every perfect spiritual blessing as He blessed our fathers, the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, through all of whom all nations were illuminated and save him and rescue him from the snares of the devil and the plots of wicked men and make him fast in his endurance. After the subject of this feast day there, may these saints whom he has commemorated bring grace from their king Christ and make him worthy to hear the voice full of all joy: "Come, the blessed of my Father, and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. Amen. Amen. So be it. Amen.

Written Epip 20 AM 708

verso

Greek

Diomedes, the lowly son of the late Joseph, the archdeacon. pray for me, a sinner.

[rest is missing]

Remember me in love, my fathers and brothers. Behold my *metanoia* that you may pray to the Lord for me that He might forgive a small portion of my sins, for there are very many of them, and that He might grant me an upright life from now on, in accordance with His holy will, I

⁴⁶ I have been unable to find any prayers to Michael in Greek and so am unable to read this properly.

Zokrator, the lowly son of the late Joseph the archdeacon of Esna. May the Lord give him rest. And may you too forgive me all my errors, because I am not skilled but a mere pupil of the masters. Behold my *metanoia*. Please forgive me.

When we wrote this book in this year 708 AH 372⁴⁷, a great wonder happened with the inundation. On day 15 of Mesore our taxes were assessed per cubit of water. But then the water level was lower by two cubits.⁴⁸ Through the prayers made on our behalf by Our Lady Mary, God visited us in his mercy [2 or 3 lines fragmentary]

verso

from day 1 of Mesore until day 19 of Thoth flowed from the wells of Apa Chrysaphius and it filled them the three.⁴⁹ There was great rejoicing and joy and they affected the sons of men many years to come.⁵⁰ Lord give us life and rest. Amen.

I,⁵¹ remember me in love, my fathers and brothers. Let everyone who reads this book pray to God on my behalf and raise me up⁵² and give me knowledge, me Cosmas the son of the deacon Apatêr and St Mercurius at Esna. Amen. Amen.

I Mercurius his [... ..]

114. M 633 endpaper recto

With God. Remember me, Lord, when you come into your kingdom,⁵³ Lord Jesus Christ Who became incarnate in Mary the Holy Virgin and became human like us, except for sin, and was

47 The numeral as it stands, $\overline{\tau\omega\epsilon}$, is not possible and the obvious solution is to read $\overline{\tau\overline{\omega\epsilon}}$. But this does not tally with the AM dating. Lantschoot suggests reading ω as $\mathbf{\Lambda}$.

48 Egypt had a series of Nilometers in various parts of the country to enable Egyptians to predict the inundation level. 16 cubits was the optimal; above or below that caused problems. Mesore 15 is several weeks before the start of the inundation. The shortfall of two cubits is substantial, and for this reason the miraculous intervention was considered worthy of recording.

49 The missing text makes it impossible to know what role the wells of Chrysaphius played in replenishing the missing water. $\mathbf{\Lambda\Phi\mathbf{M}\mathbf{A}\mathbf{Z}\mathbf{O}\mathbf{Y}\ \tau\mathbf{W}\mathbf{O}\mathbf{M}\mathbf{T}\mathbf{E}}$: it (the water) filled them (containers of some sort) three times over (guess). The water from the wells was presumably groundwater that had miraculously become abundant and was able to fill whatever containers or impoundment devices were used. Lantschoot quotes an Arab writer translated by Wüstenfeld, but I do not understand it: 'The Copts maintain that the rise of the river comes from springs on its banks.'

50 Unless this is to be read as an imperative, there should be a prefix conjugation here: $\langle\mathbf{\Lambda}\mathbf{Y}\rangle\mathbf{\tau}\mathbf{\Lambda}\mathbf{Z}\mathbf{E}\mathbf{N}\mathbf{O}\mathbf{H}\mathbf{P}\mathbf{E}\ \mathbf{N}\mathbf{H}\mathbf{P}\mathbf{O}\mathbf{M}\mathbf{E}$

51 Lantschoot has an obscure note, speculating about whether this word is a 'pen exercise' (essai de calame)-

52 I do not understand the proper meaning of $\mathbf{N}\mathbf{E}\mathbf{Q}\mathbf{T}\mathbf{\Lambda}\mathbf{\Lambda}\mathbf{E}\mathbf{I}\mathbf{T}\ \mathbf{E}\mathbf{B}\mathbf{O}\mathbf{\Lambda}$. If the verb is the *status pronominalis* form of $\mathbf{\tau}\mathbf{\Lambda}\mathbf{\Lambda}\mathbf{O}$ -, the meaning assigned in CD 409a 'send, bring out' does not seem to make much sense here.

53 Luke 23, 42. Repeated in Greek in the cryptographic passage at the end.

crucified, rose from the dead, went up to heaven and sat at the right hand of His Father. He is the one who will come to judge the living and the dead. Let Him be⁵⁴ be merciful to the soul of our brother, from whom this small remembrance has issued, the one whose name is known to God. May the seven young martyrs⁵⁵ of the Christ of St Phib the great anchorite find favour on his behalf before the good God that his sins will be forgiven on the day of his remembrance on Paope 25 that he might intercede with the Lord on his behalf to forgive him his sins and make him worthy to hear that blessed voice: "Come, those blessed of my Father, and inherit the kingdom of heaven. So be it. Amen. Amen. AM 920 [. . .]

I Mark the son of . . . deacon, son of Joseph the presbyter . . . city of Laton. Remember me when you come into your kingdom. Tôbe 17 AM 721 AH 325 (Cryptography)

115 BM 7030 two fragments

1

I Archellites, lowly deacon, son of Joseph the presbyter in the city of Laton AM 711

2

I Azarias, lowly deacon, servant of Abba Nicodemus, bishop of the city of Theon.⁵⁶ Everyone who reads this writing, let him pray.⁵⁷

116 BM 7023 fol. 37v

This good thing has come from the God-loving and revered brother Psate of Temkra in the district of Ermont.

May the God the holy archangel Raphael and St Pau the apostle bless him, Psate, and his wife and children and his work and make him a co-heir with His saints in His heavenly kingdom. Forever. Amen.

Joseph the lowly son of Sisinnius wrote it. Hathor 6 AH 349 (Greek) **117. BM. Or. 6801 fol. 31**

recto

Written in our month Pachôn 17 indiction ? AM ? AH ?

54 I take this to be a 3rd Fut.

55 The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, a text in the book (according to Lantschoot). The feast day of Phib is Paope 25.

56 Thebes.

57 This seems to be the end of the text.

verso

[2 or 3 lines missing] of George who loves the *agapê* and the offering, son of the late Phêu-. He produced this book and gave it to the monastery of Mercurius and champion for the salvation of his soul that the God of Mercurius might bless him in this world with his wife and children and all his property and, when he dies, he will find favour with Christ our king and that He might make him worthy of the . . . of a thousand years and make him worthy to hear: "Come, the blessed ones of my father, and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Amen. So be it for us all. Amen.

May Jesus Christ preserve the life and safety of the whole assembly of the brothers . . . [two names appear, but there is not enough context to identify them]

117a BM Or. 6801 fol. 30

(Greek)

Pray for me, the wretched sinner, Aurelius Victor, the lowly and unworthy deacon, son of the late Mercurius, deacon St Mercurius the great General of Laton. I wrote a book. All those who read the book. let them pray for me that the Lord might make my poor life acceptable.⁵⁸

Amen⁵⁹

[7 fragmentary lines mentioning the names Abraham and Zachary]

117a BM Or.6801 fol. 30v

(Greek)

Pray for me, the wretched sinner Aurelius Victor lowly and unworthy deacon, son of the late Mercurius of St Mercurius the great general of the city of Laton, who wrote this book. May all who read it pray for me that the Lord may guide my wretched life to a happy ending.

58 Echo of Rom 12, 2 ?

59 I think this is what the writer, who is familiar with Greek words and formulae but not Greek, wants to say.

118. BM Or. 6783

fol. 83r

recto

Written Mesore 23 indiction AM 719 AH 393

I the wretched sinner Victor, lowly deacon and servant of the late Mercurius, deacon and son of Eponychus, ⁶⁰archdeacon of St Mercurius the General at Esna wrote this book. Remember me when enter your kingdom. Amen.

verso

Through the zeal and providence of our revered God-loving brother Zachary, deacon and monk of the monastery of St Mercurius at Edfu: he produced this book through his own labours and gave it to the monastery of Mercurius, in which he is a monk, for the salvation of his soul so that St Mercurius and all the other saints whose names are recorded in this book, each one by name might bless him with every spiritual and celestial blessing

2

fol. 84 r

verso

May the Lord Jesus Christ preserve the life and safety of our cross-bearing⁶¹ fathers and brothers in the monastery, each one by name, particularly our superior Abba Abraham and the pious archdeacon Chael today that He might bring their holy blessing on my lowliness and dispense lasting blessing, fullness, plenty and safety in their monastery and save them from the snares of Satan and make the fast with endurance. So be it. Amen.

Remember me⁶² in love when you raise your holy hands for me, the most wretched sinner on earth, who is unworthy of the name given to him, Victor the deacon and may the Lord guide my life according to His will and forgive me my many sins and complete my life and that of my children in a decorously Christian way and allow my children Matthew and Theopistos his brother to prosper and grow old and enable them to do what is pleasing to Him. Behold, I

60 Greek form of $\epsilon\varphi\omicron\nu\zeta$ 'he living'. See the note by Lantschoot.

61 Reference to the cross on the cowl.

62 Coptic: $\alpha\rho\iota\tau\alpha\mu\epsilon\epsilon\gamma\epsilon$ $\nu\alpha\iota$ $\nu\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta$, where the $\nu\alpha\iota$ is superfluous.

make a *metanoia*. Remember me in love. Amen. So be it.

119. BM 7027 fol. 73

recto

I Victor, lowly deacon, son of the late Mercurius, deacon of St Mercurius the General at Esna, wrote this book. Remember me when you come into heaven.

Written Tôbe 3 AM 721 AH 395 indiction 3

verso

The archpresbyter Abba Philotheos. Through the zeal and providence of our fathers and beloved brothers, Abba Abraham the superior and the archdeacon Abba Chael the deputy superior Zachary, deacon and monk of the monastery of St Mercurius at Edfu: they produced this book through their own labours and deposited it in the monastery that it might be read to the benefit and for the edification of those who hear⁶³ it attentively so that our good Saviour and St Onnuphrios the anchorite might bless them and the whole community of their monastery with the blessing of heaven and earth which is entirely perfect and dispense lasting blessing, fullness, plenty and safety in their monastery and save them from the snares of the devily and wicked men and, when they die, which is the lot of every man, they might hear: 'Well done, good and faithful servants, for you believed in some things, I will establish you on earth. Enter the joy of your Lord'⁶⁴ and that they might become worthy to receive their inheritance with all the saints. So be it. Amen.

120. BM Or. 7026

fol. 82 v

Written Thoth 10 indiction 4 AM 722 AH 395

⁶³ Passages from edifying books were read out at meal times. The *collationes* of John Cassian were read aloud at meal times in Benedictine monasteries, and the word *colazione* survives to this day in Italian

⁶⁴ Matth. 25, 23

I Victor, lowly deacon, son of the late Mercurius, deacon, servant of the late Eponychus, archdeacon of St Mercurius the General at Esna, wrote the book. Let all who read it pray for me that the Lord might make my poor life acceptable. So be it. Amen.

Through the zeal and providence of our God-loving revered brothers who love the *agapê*, Chael the archdeacon and monk, and our brother Zachary the second deacon and monk of St Mercurius.

fol.83 r

The general Mercurius who is at Edfu, they produced the book and deposited it in their monastery that it might be read to the benefit and for the edification of those who read it attentively. May Lord Jesus Christ grant them a long life and great endurance and save them from the snares of the devil and wicked men and dispense blessing, a fullness and safety to their monastery and preserve the life of our father the superior Abba Abraham and the community of all the cross-bearing brothers, each one by name, and bring their holy blessings on my lowliness and, when they die, may they receive their inheritance with the fathers of the community of Apa Pachomius, Apa Palamon, Apa Petronius and Apa Horsiese and all the fathers of the community. Amen. So be it to us all. Amen.