

## Solomon in Coptic songs

### Coptic and English

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These texts were first published by Hermann Junker in 'Koptische Poesie des 10. Jhdts' in *Oriens Christianus* 7 (1907) pp. 136ff. I have transcribed the text presented by Junker, using square brackets only when text is missing that cannot obviously be supplied. My translation is to the right of the Coptic. The translation is line-by-line, more or less in accordance with the original, and I hope that it may be of use to students wishing not only to understand the text but also to follow the course of it, and such languages notes as I have included are intended for them. The abbreviation CD is for W.E. Crum *A Coptic Dictionary* (1939)

I have omitted the square brackets required in any edition where the reading is obvious but included them where it is not. The stanzas vary from three to five lines in length lines which are made up of a variable number of syllables. In the songs that give instructions about which mode is to be used for the vocal rendition I have omitted these instructions. Crudely put, the instruction is: 'Sing this to the tune of NN'.

In *Or. Chr.* 6 (1906) pp. 345 ff. Junker examines the terms **στοιχος** and **ουωζμ**, both used frequently in many of the song texts: broadly speaking, the former has to do with the rhythm and the latter with the tune. The subject of stanza structure is examined in pp. 347ff. and it is clear that some songs involved stanza and counterstanza (strophe and antistrophe), essentially duets with two people singing alternate units.<sup>1</sup> Whether they also involved the turning movement of the 'strophe', as in Greek tragedy, is not known. If action were involved, one might legitimately use the term 'drama' to describe the performance. Rhythm is based on stress, as is so common in many poetical traditions, except of course for the quantitative form used in Classical Greek and Latin. Broadly speaking, it would seem that in each line three syllables are stressed,<sup>2</sup> the others, however many there may be, unstressed. On p. 388 of this volume Junker addresses the subject of the age and type of poetry/songwriting involved: the former is not certain and the latter is 'popular'.

The language of the text may be loosely described as affiliated with Sahidic, but there are other forms that may reflect some other dialect, the pronunciation of the writer or increasing estrangement from the grammatical conventions observed at an earlier period. The aberrant nature of the language is particularly evident in the treatment of verbs, to which I have drawn attention in a note.

There are, not surprisingly, quite a few stories about Solomon in the closely interrelated Jewish, early Christian and Islamic traditions. Being the illegitimate child of an illicit liaison between a reigning monarch and the wife of a soldier deliberately sent by that monarch to his

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1 This was certainly the case with Archellites, the song that follows the Solomon songs in Junker's text publication. One thinks also of the traditional English song of unknown age, 'Scarborough Fair'.

2 Junker uses the terms *Tonstelle*, *Hebung*, *Wortakzent*, and I am unable to detect any difference between them.

death, his talent for pithy utterances, wisdom, temple building and liaison with an exotic queen could hardly fail to make Solomon an attractive character. The stories translated below are: The Stepson, Solomon and Sheba (subdivided by Junker into four sections), The Magic Cup and the Magic Column and The Thieves in the Garden, with a Concluding Song.

### The Stepson

This song seems to have its beginning and end intact. The boy's complaint in the second stanza suggests that his father was in a monogamous marriage, unlike Solomon. The 'wicked stepmother' trope is common in European storytelling (for example in the rewritten stories of Charles Perrault and the Grimm Brothers) and the reputation of this figure is clearly much older: Herodotus 4, 154 writes of the ruler of Crete's new wife (who is never named) as coming into the house as the wicked stepmother not only in name but also in reality ( ἡ δὲ ἐπεσελοῦσα ἐδικαίου καὶ τῷ ἔργῳ εἶναι μητρική), which seems to confirm what Euripides later wrote of the stepmother in *Alcestis* 311 as someone 'no kinder than a viper' (ἐχίδνης οὐδὲν ἡπιωτέρα).

ΠΑΧΟΕΙΣ ΨΗΖΤΗΚ ΖΑΡΟΙ  
† ΝΟΥΖΑΠ ΕΔΙΚΑΙΟΝ ΕΡΟΙ  
ΧΕΤΑΜΑΛΥ ΗΤΟΝ ΕΜΟΣ

“My Lord, have mercy on me.  
Give me just judgement,  
for my mother has gone to her rest

ΑΠΑΙΩΤ ΧΙΚΑΙΟΥΕΙ ΠΕΣΜΑ  
ΟΥΑΤΝΑΤΕ ΖΙΠΕΣΖΗΤ  
ΑΣΕΡΖΗΝΝΟΒ ΕΠΕΘΟΟΥ ΕΡΟΙ

My father took another in her place,  
A merciless woman in her heart.  
She committed great wicked acts against me.”

ΜΠΕΥΟΕΙΩ ΕΡΕΣΟΛΟΜΩΝ ΕΡΡΡΟ  
ΕΦΤΖΑΠ ΖΝΟΥΖΑΠ ΕΦΣΟΥΤΩΝ  
ΕΡΕΠΡΝΟΥΤΕ ΗΤΠΕ ΨΟΟΠ ΝΕΜΑΖ

At the time when Solomon was king  
Giving upright judgement,  
God of heaven being with him

ΕΡΕΡΩΜΕ ΝΙΜ ΤΕΟΟΥ ΝΑΖ  
ΟΥΝΟΥΡΩΜΕ ΝΡΗΜΑΟ  
ΝΤΑΤΕΦΣΖΙΜΕ ΚΑΣΩΜΑ ΕΖΡΑΙ

Every man glorifies him.  
There is a wealthy man  
Whose wife died

ΟΥΨΗΡΕ ΝΖΟΟΥΤ ΕΟΥΣΑΙΕ ΜΜΑΤΕΠΕ  
ΖΜΠΕΦΣΜΟΥ [ . . . missing . . .  
..... ]

A boy, extremely handsome  
In his blessing [ . . .

. . . [ΨΗ]ΡΕ ΨΗΜ .....  
ΜΠΕΣΕΙΡΕ ΝΗΜΑΖ ΝΟΥΠΕΤΝΑΝΟΥΦ  
ΗΠΕΣΤΩΖΣ ΕΤΕΦΑΠΕ ΝΝΕΖ ΝΟΥΖΟΟΥ

. . . small boy .....  
She did not do anything good with him  
She did not anoint his head with oil ever

ΝΕΝΑΗΤ ΝΕΥΤΩΖΣ ΕΜΟΦ  
ΜΠΕΣ† ΝΟΥΖΟΙΤΕ ΕΣΡΑΖΕ ΕΧΩΦ  
ΝΕΨΝΖΤΗΦΝΕ ΕΥ† ΜΜΟΟΥ ΖΙΩΩΦ

Merciful people used to anoint him.  
She did not put clean clothes on him  
It was the charitable who clothed him

ΕΦΨΑΝΤΩΟΥΝ ΕΨΩΡΠ ΕΜΗΝΕ  
ΨΑΣ† ΝΨΟΜΗΤ ΝΟΕΙΚ ΝΑΖ  
ΨΑΦΧΙΤΟΥ ΕΤΟΟΤΣ ΖΝΟΥΨΠΖΜΟΤ

When got up early every day  
She would give him three loaves of bread  
He would take them from gratefully

ΨΑΦΕΙ Ε... Ρ ΜΕΨΩΙΝΕ ΝΣΩΦ  
ΨΑΦΒΩΚ ΕΧΜΠΤΑΦΟΣ ΕΤΕΦΜΑΛΥ  
ΨΑΦΖΜΟΟΣ ΝΦΡΙΜΕ ΕΦ ... ΝΦ ΕΧΩΦ

He would go . . . they did not seek him  
He would go his mother's grave  
And sit and weep . . . for her

ΧΕΖΑΜΟΙ ΕΝΕΝΤΑΡΒΙΤ ΕΠΕΣΗΤ ΝΜΜΕ  
ΤΑΜΕΡΙΤ ΗΜΑΛΥ Χ ... Γ ... ΒΗΙΝΕΜ  
... line missing . . .

“If only you had taken me down with you,  
My beloved mother .....  
.....”

... ΤΕΣΖΙΜΕ ΘΛΙΒΕ ΜΜΟΦ  
ΑΦΤΩΟΥΝ ΑΦΒΩΚ ΨΑΣΟΛΟΜΩΝ ΠΕΡΟ  
ΑΦΡΙΜΕ ΑΦΧΙΨΚΑΚ ΕΒΟΛ

. . . the woman oppressed him,  
He rose and went to Solomon the king.  
He wept and cried out:

ΧΕΠΑΧΟΕΙΣ ΨΗΖΤΗΚ ΖΑΡΟΙ  
† ΝΟΥΖΑΠ ΕΔΙΚΑΙΟΝ ΕΡΟΙ  
ΧΕΤΑΜΑΛΥ ΗΤΟΝ ΕΜΟΣ .

'My lord, have mercy on mGive me a just  
judgement,  
For my mother is dead.

ΑΠΑΙΩΤ ΧΙΚΑΙΟΥΕΙ ΠΕΣΜΑ

My father has taken another in her place.

ΟΥΑΤΝΑΤΕ ΖΙΠΕΣΖΗΤ  
ΑΣΕΡΟΥΝΟΒ ΕΠΕΘΟΥ ΕΡΟΙ

She is merciless in her heart.  
She has done me great wrong.

ΝΤΕΡΕΣΟΛΟΜΩΝ ΣΩΤΗ ΕΝΙΦΑΧΕ ·  
ΕΡΕΠΩΗΡΕ ΨΗΜ ΤΑΥΟ ΜΜΟΥΓ ·  
ΑΦΜΚΑΖ ΕΖΗΤ ΖΑΡ ... ΕΧΩΓ

When Solomon heard these words  
Uttered by the boy  
He became sad for ... him

ΧΕΟΥΣΑΙΕΠΕ [gap of 4 lines]

For he was a handsome ....

ΤΩΟΥΝ ΝΓΒΩΚ ΕΠΕΚΗΙ  
... ΑΝ ... ΣΑΨΓ ΕΖΟΥΓ ..... ΜΟΥ  
ΨΑΙΤΖΑΠ ΕΡΟΚ ..... ΑΤ

"Arise and go home ...  
... seven days .... die/death  
I will give you a judgement

ΑΠΥΣ ΨΗΜ ΤΩΟΥΝ ΑΦΒΩΚ ΕΠΕΦΗΙ  
ΑΦΝΚΟΤΚ ΕΠΕΣΗΤ ΕΦΨΩΝΕ  
ΜΠΕΤΕΣΖΙΜΕ ΘΨΩΤ ΕΡΟΓ ΝΟΥΖΟΥ

The son arose and went home  
He lay down ill  
The woman never looked at him

ΜΠΣΕΙΡΕ ΝΕΜΑΓ ΝΟΥΠΕΤΝΑΝΟΥΓ  
ΜΠΕΣΤ ΝΟΥΨΑΧΕ ΗΜΟΥ ΝΨΡΨ ΝΑΓ  
ΚΑΤΑΘΕ ΝΝΕΤΝΚΟΤΚ ΕΥΨΩΝΕ ΤΗΡΟΥ

She did not do a good thing for him  
She did not give a cup of cool water  
As for all those who are sick

ΨΑΣΒΩΚ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΨΑΣΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΕΧΩΓ ·  
ΜΕΣΤ ΝΟΥΨΑΧΕ ΝΣΟΛΣΑ ΕΠΕΦΖΗΤ  
ΨΑΦΒΙ ΝΝΕΦΒΑΛ ΕΖΡΑΙ ΕΠΘΣ ·

She would go in his room and come out  
Without saying a word to comfort him.  
He would raise his eyes to the LOrd

.....  
..... ΖΗΝ ΝΟΥΝ ΝΙΜΚΑΤΑΘΕ ΝΝΕΝΙΟΤΕ  
ΤΗΡΟΥ

.....  
..... way of everyone  
As for all our fathers.

ΑΥΤΣΑΒΕΣΟΛΟΜΩΝ ΕΡΟΓ ΖΙΤΜΠΠΝΑ  
ΝΤΑΥΒΙΤΓ ΕΚΟΥΝΓ ΝΑΒΡΑΖΑΜ  
ΑΦΣΕΛΣΩΛΓ ΖΝΝΕΦΑΓΑΘ ·

Solomon was told about him by the Spirit:  
"He has been taken up to the bosom of  
Abraham,  
Who comforts<sup>3</sup> him with his good things

ΑΙΣΑΚ ΧΙΤΓ ΕΠΕΖΑΜΗΡ

Isaac took him into his arms

.....  
.....

.....  
*Several words including 'father', 'God' and  
'face' can be read, but there is no connected  
sense*

ΨΑΥΤ ΝΖΝΝΟΒ ΕΤΑΙΟ ΝΑΓ

They gave him great honours

3 Coptic σολσα can also mean 'adorn'

## Solomon and the Queen of Sheba

Hebrew tradition (e.g. midrash) has several examples of interviews between these two characters, in which the king poses riddles that he then answers and petitioning queen poses questions and riddles magisterially solved Solomon. I have not been able to find any of the stories told here, apart from the reference to the ring and demons.

ΤΩΟΥΝ ΜΑΡΟΝ ΤΕΝΒΩΚ ΕΘΙΕΛΗ̄  
ΤΗΝΝΑΥ ΕΣΟΛΟΜΩΝ ΕΤΑΥΕΙΡΕ ΜΜΟQ ΝΟΥΕΡΟ  
ΝΤΑQΚΕΤΠΗΙ ΕΠΩC̄ ΝΕΒΟΜ  
ΑQΧΟΚQ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΝΟΥΓΡΑΦΕ

Arise and let us go to Jerusalem  
To see Solomon who has been made  
And built the house of the Lord of Hosts.  
He completed it in joy

ΟΥΝΟΥQ ΖΙΖΑΤΠΕ ΖΙΩΝΕ ΜΜΕ ΕQΧΗΚ ΕΒΟΛ  
ΑΝΕΡΩΟΥ ΕΠΚΑΖ ΗΝΝΕΥΔΩΡΟΝ ΝΑQ ΕCΑCΑ ΝΙΜ  
ΧΟΥΝΟB ΕΜΑΤΕΠΕ ΠΕQΤΑΙΟ  
ΜΕΟΥΝ<sup>4</sup> ΕQΤΗΝΤΩΝ ΕΡΟQ

Gold and silver and every precious stone  
in its construction  
The kings of the earth brought their gifts to  
him from all over  
For his honour is great.  
There is no-one like him.

ΑΠΕΚCΟΕΙΤ ΕΤΝΑΝΟΥQ ΕΙ ΝΑΙ  
ΧΙΝΙΖΙΤΑΧΩΡΑ  
ΧΕΝΤΚΟΥCΟΦΟC ΕΡΕΜΝΖΗΤ  
ΜΕΥΟΝ ΕQΕΙΝΕ ΜΜΟΚ

“Your good fame has come to me  
While<sup>6</sup> I was still in my country  
For you are wise and intelligent.  
There is no-one like you

ΑΙΕΙ ΨΑΡΟΚ CΟΛΟΜΩΝ  
ΜΗΝΑΖΜΖΑΛ ΝΕΜΑΙ  
ΠΟΡΧΟΥ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΑΙ ΕΝΕΥΕΡΗΥ  
ΤΑΧΩ ΜΠΕΚΤΑΙΟ

I have come to you, Solomon  
And my servants with me  
Separate<sup>7</sup> them for me from each other  
And I will sing your praise

ΜΠΟΥΩΝΡΩΜΕ ΖΙΠΙCΡΑΗΛ  
ΕQΜΕΖ ΕCΟΦΙΑ ΕΤΕΚΖΕ  
CΟΛΟΜΩΝ ΠΡΡΟ ΝΔΙΚΑΙΟC

No man has been found in Israel  
Full of wisdom like you  
Solomon, the just king

ΑΠΩC̄ ΩΡΚ ΕΔΑΔ̄ ΠΕΚΙΩΤ  
ΑQΘΜCΟ ΜΜΟΚ ΕΧΜΠΕQΘΕΡΟΝΟC  
†ΡΗΝΗ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΕCΕΩΩΠΕ ΝΕΜΜΑΚ

The Lord swore to David your father.  
He placed you on his throne.  
The peace of God be with you

ΟΥΝΟB ΕΜΑΤΕΠΕ ΠΕΚΤΑΙΟ  
ΜΕΠΕΟΟΥ ΕΤΑΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΤΑΑQ ΝΑΚ CΟΛΟΜΩΝ ΠΡΡΟ  
ΝΔΙΚΑΙΟC

Your honour is great  
And the glory that God has given to you,  
Solomon the just king.

ΑΚΚΕΤΠΗΙ ΕΠΩC̄ ΚΑΛΩC  
ΑΚΧΟΚQ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΝΟΥΓΡΑΦΕ

You built the house of the Lord well  
You finished in joy

4 This form of the neg. aor. prefix in the *status nominalis*, also used later on, is not recorded by Crum cf. CD 182b

ΑΠΕΚΡ(ΛΦΕ ΧΩΚ ΕΒΟΛ)

ΑΛΗΘΩΣ ΟΥΝΟΒΠΕ ΠΕΚΤΑΙΟ  
ΜΕΠΕΟΥ ΕΤΑΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΤΑΛΑ ΝΑΚ  
ΣΟΛΟΜΩΝ ΠΡΡΟ ΝΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ  
ΜΕΥΟΝ ΕΦΤΝΤΩΝ ΕΡΟΚ

ΧΑΚΚΕΤΠΗΙ ΕΠΩΣ̄ ΕΝΕΒΟΜ  
ΑΚΧΟΚΦ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΗΝΟΥΡΑΦΕ  
†ΡΥΝΗ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΕΣΕΨΩΠΕ ΝΕΜΑΚ  
ΖΙΜΑΑ ΝΙΜ ΕΨΑΚ(ΒΩΚ ΕΡΟΦ)

ΟΥΝΟΥΨΗΝ ΡΗΤ ΖΙΤΑΧΩΡΑ  
ΣΟΛΟΜΩΝ ΠΩΣ̄ ΕΝΕΡΩΟΥ ΕΠΚΑΖ  
ΕΦΧΟΣΕ ΜΜΑΤΕ ΕΦΠΟΡΨ ΕΒΟΛ  
ΕΡΕΟΥΚΑΡΠΟΣ ΑΛΗΨ ΕΡΟΦ

ΕΚΨΑΝΒΕΠΖΝΩΒΕ ΕΒΟΛ ΕΖΗΤΦ  
ΤΕΚΟΒΟΥ ΕΠΕΣΗΤ ΕΠΑΠΟΤ ΝΓΣΩ  
ΨΑΡΕΟΥΣ†ΝΟΥΒΕ ΨΩΠΕ ΖΙΠΕΚΣΩΜΑ  
ΜΕΟΥΟΝ ΕΦΤΝΤΩΝ ΕΡΟΦ

ΟΥΝΟΥΨΥΓΗ ΜΜΟΟΥ ΖΙΤΑΧΩΡΑ  
ΣΟΛΟΜΩΝ ΠΩΣ̄ ΕΝΕΡΩΟΥ ΕΠΚΑΖ  
ΕΡΕΠΕΣΜΟΟΥ ΖΟΛΩ ΕΠΕΦΨ  
ΕΡΕΝΕΦΩΣΤΗΡ ΝΗΨ ΕΡΑΤΣ

ΑΝΑΒΑΛ ΝΑΨ ΕΠΡΗ ΜΠΠΟΟΥ  
ΕΤΑΨΕΙ ΕΠΕΣΗΤ ΑΨΧΩΚΜ ΕΖΗΤΣ  
ΕΣΟΥΖ̄ ΜΠΑΡΜΟΥΤΕ  
ΕΡΕΝΕΨΗΝ ΠΩΒΕ ΕΒΟΛ

ΟΥΝΟΥΨΗΝ ΡΗΤ ΖΙΤΑΠΟΛΙΣ  
Ψ ΣΟΛΟΜΩΝ ΠΡΡΟ  
ΕΦΡΗΤ ΖΙΠΚΗΠΟΣ ΕΝΑΙΟΤΕ  
ΠΚΑΡΠΟΣ ΕΦ† ΜΜΟΦ ΕΒΟΛ  
ΕΡΕΟΥΖΙΚΩΝ ΣΗΖ ΕΡΟΦ

ΕΡΨΑΝΝΕΖΙΟΜΕ ΝΑΨ ΕΡΟΦ  
ΨΑΨΕΠΙΘΥΜΙ ΕΡΟΦ  
ΨΑΨΧΠΟ ΝΝΕΨΨΗΡΕ ΚΑΤΑΡΟΦ  
ΕΙΟΥΕΨΚΤΑΜΟΙ ΕΠΕΦΒΨΑ  
ΧΕΝΤΚΟΥΣΟΦΟΣ ΕΡΕΜΕΖΗΤ

ΠΨΗΝ ΕΤΕΡΨΑΧΕ ΕΡΟΦ  
ΙΕΣΑΒΑ<sup>5</sup> ΤΕΡΨ ΝΝΕΒΟΨΨ  
ΠΑΠΕ ΠΡΗ ΠΡΕΦΡΟΥΘΕΙΝ  
ΕΦΖΙΠΣΑ ΝΝΕΜΑ ΝΨΑ  
ΜΕΛΑΑΨ ΕΙΜΕ ΕΤΕΦΘΙΝΕΙ

Your joy was complete.

Truly, it is great, your honour  
And the glory God has given to you,  
Solomon the king.  
There is no-one like you.

For you have built the house of the Lord of  
Hosts  
The peace of God be with you  
Everywhere you go

There is a tree growing in my country,  
Solomon the king of kings of the earth,  
Very high and spreading,  
With fruit on it.

If you take some of its leaves  
And press them into the cup and drink,  
A fragrance forms in your mouth.  
There is nothing like it.

There is a spring of water in my country,  
Solomon, lord of kings of the earth,  
Its water sweeter than honey,  
To which the illuminating beacons come.

My eyes have seen the sun and the moon  
That came down and bathed in it  
On 7th of Parmoute<sup>8</sup>  
The trees bursting into leaf.

There is a tree growing in my city,  
King Solomon,  
Growing in the garden of my fathers.  
The fruit which it produces  
Has an image depicted on it.

When women see it,  
They desire it  
And bear their children according to it.  
I want you to tell me what it means,  
For you are wise and intelligent.”

“The tree you speak of,  
Sheba queen of the Ethiopians,,  
Is the sun, the beacon  
That is in the east.  
No-one knows its course.

5 Not necessarily an alternative form of the name, but the Arabic vocative particle ٤

ΕΡΨΑΝΝΕΖΙΟΝΕ ΝΑΥ ΕΡΟϞ  
ΨΑΥΕΠΙΘΥΜΙ ΕΡΟϞ  
ΕΤΒΕ ΠΕϞΟΥΟΕΙΝ ΕΨΑϞΨΑ  
ΨΑΥΤΕΛΗΛ ΕΜΟΟΥ ΝΣΕΡΑΨΕ  
ΣΟΛΟΜΩΝ ΠΡΡΟ ΝΣΑΒΕ  
ΑϞΒΕΛΠΙΜΗΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ

When women see it,  
They desire it  
For its light that shines,  
They rejoice and are joyful.”  
Solomon the wise king  
Solved the mystery.

ΟΥΝΟΥΨΗΝ ΕϞΡΗΤ ΖΙΤΑΧΨΑ  
Ω ΣΟΛΟΜΩΝ ΠΡΡΟ  
ΟΥΣΑΙΗ ΜΜΑΤΕΠΕ ΝΕΣΨϞ

“There is a tree growing in my country,  
King Solomon,  
It is very beautiful.

ΨΑϞΚΨΩΡΕ ΜΠΝΑΥ ΕΠΡΟΥΖΕ  
ΨΑϞΞΟΥΨ ΜΠΝΕ ΕΖΤΟΟΥΕ  
ΜΠΙΝΑ ΠΕϞΣΑ ΖΙΞΚΟΥΜΕΝΗ

It is cut down at evening  
And grows in the morning.  
I have never seen anything as beautiful on  
earth.

ΕΡΕΟΥΣΨΕ ΖΙΟΥΝΑΜ ΜΜΟΒ  
ΕΣΜΕΖ ΝΩΝΕ ΜΜΕ  
ΕΡΕΟΥΩΝ ΝΙΜ ΕΠΙΗΥΜΕΙ ΕΡΟΣ

There is a field to the right of it  
Full of precious stones  
Which everyone desires.

ΟΥΒΑΙΨΙΝΕ ΝΗΥ ΚΑΤΑΡΟΜΠΕ  
ΕϞΟΥΠΠ ΕΝΑΓΑΘΟΝ  
ΕϞΞ ΝΝΑΤΑΧΨΑ ΤΗΡΟΥ

A messenger comes once a year,  
Laden with good things  
Which he gives to all of those in my country.

ΨΑϞΣΤΟϞ ΤΕϞΚΨ ΠΕϞΗ  
ΕΙΟΥΕΨΚΒΟΛΟΥ ΕΡΟΙ ΣΟΛΟΜΩΝ  
ΤΑΧΨ ΜΠΕΚΤΑΙΟ

He returns and leaves<sup>9</sup> his house.  
I want you to explain this to me, Solomon,  
And I will sing your praise.”

ΠΨΗΝ ΕϞΡΗΤ ΖΙΤΟΥΧΨΑ  
ΙΕΣΑΒΑ ΤΕΡΨ ΝΝΕΒΟΟΨ  
ΕΡΕΠΑΙ ΤΝΤΩΝ ΕΠΡΗ

“The tree growing in your country,  
Sheba queen of the Ethiopians,  
Is like the sun.

ΨΑϞΖΩΤΠ ΕΡΟΥΖΕ ΜΜΗΝΕ  
ΤΕϞΗΡΟΥΟΕΙΝ ΕΨΩΡΠ ΜΜΗΝΕ  
ΜΠΙΝΑ ΠΕϞΣΑ ΖΙΞΚΟΥΜΕΝΗ

It sets every evening  
And shines early every morning.  
I have not seen anything as beautiful on  
earth.

ΞΨΨΕ ΕΣΖΙΤΟΥϞ ΕΠΙΨΗΝ  
ΕΡΕΤΑΙ ΤΝΤΩΝ ΕΤΠΕ  
ΝΩΝΕ ΜΜΕΝΕ ΝΣΙΟΥ

The field next to the tree,  
It is like heaven.  
The precious stones are the stars

ΕΥΗΡΟΥΟΕΙΝ ΕΠΝΑΥ ΕΡΟΥΖΕ  
ΕΡΨΑΝΠΡΗ ΨΑ ΨΑΥΨΠΕ ΝΚΑΚΕ  
ΕΤΒΕΠΟΥΟΕΙΝ ΕϞΚΩΤΕ ΕΠΡΗ

That shine at evening.  
When the sun shines, they become dark  
Because of the light surroundig the sun.

7 The verb used here is **ΠΩΡΧ** (divide, separate), often confused with **ΠΩΡΨ** (spread out). They convey the same idea as the Latin *solvere*, which of course has found its way into English. **ΕΝΕΥΕΡΗΥ**: Junker understands this as **ΜΝΝΕΕΥΡΗΥ** 'all'

6 Coptic **ΧΙΝΙ**. On this use of the conjunction cf. CD 772b meaning (b)

8 Parmoute is described in Pseudo-Cyril of Jerusalem *Life and Passion of Christ* (ed. and tr. R. van der Broek §1b of the Coptic text) as **ΠΕΒΟΤ ΝΝΞΞΟΥΨ ΝΝΨΗΝ** 'growing season of the trees'

9 This makes no sense. A verb such as **ΚΩΤΕ** (or some form of it) 'turn' is required.

ΠΙΒΑΨΙΝΕ ΕΦΗΝΗ ΕΤΟΥΧΩΡΑ  
ΠΕ ΠΙΜΟΟΥ ΕΠΙΕΡΟ ΝΚΗΜΕ  
ΕΦΤΣΙΟ ΜΠΚΑΖ ΚΑΤΑΡΟΜΠΕ

The messenger who comes to your country  
Is the water of the river of Egypt  
Which irrigates the land every year."

ΕΙΟΥΕΨΟΥΖΑΛΗΤ ΕΦΖΗΛ ΕΦΟΥΗΖ  
ΝΦΖΩΛ ΝΦΕΙ ΨΑΡΟΙ ΟΝ  
ΤΑΧΩ ΕΡΟΦ ΕΠΙΜΗΣ/

I wish for a bird that flies and stops  
To fly and come to me again  
That I might tell it the mystery

ΝΦΧΟΟΥΦ ΕΨΚΟΥΜΕΝΗ ΤΗΡΕΣ  
ΕΙΟΥΕΨΟΥΣΟΦΟΣ ΕΡΕΜΝΖΗΤ  
ΝΦΒΕΛΠΙΜΗΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΕΡΟΙ

And send it to the whole world.  
I want a wise and intelligent man  
To explain the mystery to me.

ΠΙΜΑΣ ΕΖΑΛΗΤ ΕΦΖΗΛ ΕΟΥΗΖ  
ΠΕ ΠΨΑΧΕ ΕΦΖΗΠ ΕΠΟΥΤΑΓΟΦ  
ΕΨΑΝΤΑΓΟΦ ΨΑΦΨΡΕΨ ΕΒΟΛ

The young bird that flies and stops  
Is the hidden word that is not uttered.  
If it is uttered, it is divulged

ΝΦΜΟΥΨΤ ΕΨΚΟΥΜΕΝΗ ΤΗΡΕΣ  
ΣΟΛΟΜΩΝ ΠΠΑΡΖΥΜΙΑΣΤΗΣ  
ΑΦΒΕΛΠΙΜΗΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΕΡΟΙ

And visits the whole world.  
Solomon the 'proverbialist'  
Has explained it to me.

### The Magic Cup and the Magic Column

ΓΕ ΓΑΡ ΑΦΧΙ ΝΟΥΑΠΟΤ ΝΕΡΒ ΑΦΤΑΑΣ ΝΑΣ  
ΕΛΦΨΠΕΦΚΣΟΥΡ ΕΠΕΣΗΤ ΕΡΑΦ  
ΑΣΑΒΟ ΤΕΡΡΩ ΨΑΧΕ ΝΜΑΦ  
ΧΕΕΨΑΝΣΩ ΝΟΥΑΠΟΤ ΝΕΡΠ ΕΤΖΙΤΕΚΔΙΧ  
ΨΑΙΘΕΒΙΟ ΜΠΚΜΤΟ ΕΒΟΛ

He also took a cup of wine and gave it to her,  
Having put his ring in it.  
Sheba the queen said to him:  
"If I drink a cup of wine that is in your hand,  
I become humble in your presence.

ΔΙΝΑΤΩΟΥΝ ΤΑϞΙ ΜΠΑΝΟΥϞ  
Ω ΣΩΛΟΜΟΝ ΠῸϞ ΝΕΡΡΩΟΥ  
ΕΨΩΠΕ

*The rest of the stanza is very fragmentary, but  
the last line seems to be the same as that of the  
previous stanza.*

ΕΥΝΟΥϞΤΥΛΛΟϞ ΖΙΤΑΧΟΡΑ  
Ω ΣΩΛΟΜΟΝ ΠῸϞ ΕΝΕΡΡΩΟΥ  
ΚΨΑΝΧΑΟΥ ΤΕΚΕΙΝΤϞ ΕΠΙΜΑ  
ΨΑΒΕΡΨΟΥϞ ΖΙΠΕΚΠΑΛΛΑΤΙΟΝ

ΣΩΟΥΖΑ ΕΡΑΙ ΝΤΕΜΩΝΙΟΝ ΤΗΡΟΥ  
ΕΤΖΑΤΕΚΖΟΥϞΙΑ  
ΝΤΟΥϞΙΝΕ ΨΑΡΑΙ ΜΠΕϞΤΥΛΛΟϞ  
ΑΨΑΡΠΙ †ΠΕϞΟΥΑΙ ΧΕΟΥ . . . ΨΑΡΟΥΖΙ  
ΑΠΜΕΖῸ . . . . ΝΤΕΥΝΟΥ

ΑΤΠΑΨΙ ΝΤΕΜΟΝΙΟΝ †ΠΕϞΟΥΑΙ ΨΑΣΩΛΟΜΟΝ  
ΧΕΙΝΠΝΙΒΙ ΝΡΩΚ ΨΑΠΝΙΒΙ  
ΨΑΙΕΝΕ ΕΡΑΚ ΕΠΙϞΤΥΛΛΟϞ  
ΗΤΑ ΕΡΕΨΑΧΕ ΖΝΡΟϞ ΝΣΩΛΟΜΟΝ

ΕΙϞΤΠΑΨΙ ΝΔΕΜΟΝΙΟΝ ΑϞΙ  
ΕΡΕΨΕϞΤΥΛΛΟϞ ΖΙΧΜΠΕϞΤΕΝΑΖ  
ΕϞΠΩΝΙ ΠΩΝΙ ΕΠΙϞΑ ΜΕΠΑΙ  
ΝΘΗ ΝΝΕΖΑΙΕΜΕ ΝΕΜΜΟΥϞ

ΘΕΨΡΙΑ ΝΙΜ ΕΤΖΙΧΜΠΚΑΖ  
ΣΕϞΣΗΖ ΖΙΧΜΠϞΤΥΛΛΟϞ  
ΕΡΕ . . . †ΟΝ ΜΠΡΗ ΜΝΠΟΥϞ . . . ΖΙΧΩϞ  
ΟΥΨΠΗΡΙ ΜΜΑ†ΠΕ ΕΝΑΥ ΕΡΟϞ

I will arise and take my mind,  
Solomon, lord of kings.  
If . . . . .

There is a column in my country,  
Solomon, lord of kings.  
If you send and bring it here,  
It will be useful in your palace.

Gather yourselves, all the demons  
That are under your authority  
That the column may be brought to me  
The first made went: “. . .<sup>10</sup> until evening.”  
The second . . . . . at that moment.

Half of the demons went to Solomon:  
“From the breath of your mouth to the breath,  
I will bring you the column  
Then, as Solomon was speaking.

Half of the demons came,  
The column on their wings,  
Swinging from side to side  
Like the waves of the sea.

Every sight that is on the earth  
Is depicted on the column  
There being . . . of the sun and the moon on it,  
*Mirabile valde visu.*

## The Thieves in the Garden

ΑΠΣΟΛΟΜΩΝ ΠΨΗΡΕ ΝΔᾶᾶ † Ν . . . . ΠΟΥϞ  
ΑΡΧΗ  
ΜΠΕϞΕΙΩΤ . . . . .  
. . . ΖΙΧΜΠΕΘΡΟΝΟϞ . . . ΕΚΑΠΕ . . .  
*several lines missing*  
. . . . . ΑΝῸΜ . . . .  
ΖΙΤΕϞΠΟΛΙϞ . . . . .

Solomon the son of David . . . . .  
*little sense is to be got from the next few lines*  
. . . . . the gardens . . . . .  
in his city . . . . .

10 Something like 'There is' or 'What'

ΒΩΚ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΕΠΩΜ ΠΑΡΑΠΕΦΟΥΨ  
ΑΥΟΥΟΜΠΕΛΟΟΛΕ ΜΜΑΥ  
ΜΠΟΥΚΑΛΑΑΥ ΕΣΑΨΝΟΥΝΕ

Went into the garden against his wish  
And ate his grapes there  
And left nothing but the roots.

ΑΦΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΕΒΙΠΩΣ ΕΤΟΥΣΙΑ ΝΟ . . .  
ΑΦΩΝ ΝΕΣΟΟΝ ΕΤΑΥΟΥΨΜ  
ΑΦ . . . . ΤΕ ΑΦΤΑΛΕ . . . .  
ΑΦΒΩΚ . . . . .

The master came to the property of . . .  
And found the thieves who had eaten . . .

*c. seven lines missing*

*I can make little sense of the next few lines*

. . . ΟΟΥ ΕΦ . . . . . ΖΙΩΨΑ  
ΑΦ . . . . . ΤΕΦΑΠΕ  
ΕΦΜΟΨΕ ΕΦΣΑΖΟΥ ΝΔΑΔ ΠΡΡΟ

He walking and cursing David the king.

ΑΦΖΕΣΟΛΟΜΩΝ . . . ΖΙΘΗ ΜΜΟΦ  
ΝΤΟΦ ΜΕΤΕΦΤΑΖΙΣ ΤΗΡΟΥ  
ΠΕΧΑΦ ΝΑΦ ΧΕΕΤΒΕΟΥ ΕΚΜΟΨΕ  
ΕΚΣΑΖΟΥ ΝΔΑΔ ΠΑΙΩΤ

He found Solomon . . . before him,  
He and all his troops.  
He said to him: "Why are you walking  
And cursing my father David?"

ΝΤΟΦ ΔΕ ΑΦΟΥΨΒ ΝΑΦ  
ΧΕ . . . . .

He answered him, saying . . . . .

#### Concluding song

ΠΙΕΡΑ ΕΤΖΜΑΑΣ ΕΧΕΜΠΕΦΦΩΝΨΕ  
ΕΒΨΑΠ ΚΑΛΨΣ · ΖΕΝΟΥΣΑΥΤΕΝ  
ΕΡΕΝΙΑΧΑΥ ΖΕΠΕΒΗ  
ΠΑΠΕ ΣΨΛΩΨΩΝ ΠΨΗΡΕ ΝΔΑΥΕΙΔ  
ΕΡΕΝΔΕΜΩΝΙΟΝ ΖΕΜΠΕΒΕΙ

The king who sits on his throne<sup>11</sup>  
Dispensing justice well in rectitude,  
The vipers/crookbacks<sup>12</sup> in his house.  
This is Solomon son of David.  
The demons<sup>13</sup> are in his house.

11 The final  $\omega\epsilon$  may perhaps be understood as the archaic  $\omicron$  'great' cf, CD 253a.

12 These are two possible ways of understanding the word:  $\alpha\chi\omega$  (CD 25b) and  $\chi\omicron$  (CD 753b), the latter being particularly attractive as a contrast to what precedes it.

13 In medieval Jewish literature it is the ring or seal of Solomon that gives power over the demons, whom he was able to employ usefully in the construction of the temple cf. Testament of Solomon.