

Shenoute on Mercy and Justice

Anthony Alcock

The following Sahidic Coptic text was first published as such in É. Chassinat *Le quatrième livre des entretiens et épîtres de Shenouti* MIFAO 23 (1911) pp. 84-94¹ and later by P. du Bourguet 'Entretien de Schenouté sur les devoirs des juges' *Bulletin de l'Institut Français Orientale* 55 (1955) pp. 87-109. The English translation that follows it is mine. The numbers in brackets throughout the text are the page numbers of the manuscript.

The *entretien* in question is a speech in which Shenoute, the 5th abbot of the White Monastery complex of establishments near Sohag in Upper Egypt, welcomes the governor, the most important government representative of the region, and takes the opportunity to lecture him about mercy (ⲛⲁ) and just law (ⲉⲁⲡ), qualities seen as essential to even-handed administration.² It is not known if Flavian was invited for this 'summit conference' by Shenoute or whether he himself suggested the meeting and the venue himself, but his attendance is a clear sign that the governor did not consider his visit to the monastery to be beneath him. Whether complaints of high-handed treatment of non-monastic residents of the region by the civil authorities or complaints by some of those residents against the abbot had prompted Shenoute to organize the meeting is not known. A passage on p. 259 of the text suggests that complaints may have been made against him by some unidentified person 'belonging to your country' (ⲉϣⲏⲡ ⲉⲛⲉⲧⲛⲓⲱⲣⲁ)³, apparently involving another 'governor' (ⲉⲛⲉⲙⲱⲛ).

On the historical person of Flavian, who cannot be identified beyond this text, and the value of the works of Shenoute as a source of administrative history, cf. J. Hahn 'Hoher Besuch im Weissen Kloster' *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 87 (1991) pp. 248-252.

The publication of du Bourguet (pp. 101-109) has a useful index of Coptic words and forms arranged alphabetically, thus the *status pronominalis* of ⲉⲓⲣⲉ is located under ⲁ (ⲁⲁ=). My translation incorporates the corrections and suggestions in du Bourguet's 'Commentaire' without explicit reference to them (pp. 95-100). I have not included all the scriptural references identified by du Bourguet.

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- 1 Chassinat's transcription is punctilious to a degree that I have been unable to achieve, cf. the plates of the splendid manuscript at the end of the book. Parts of a parallel text were published the previous year by É. Amélineau *Les oeuvres de Shenoudi* (1910): according to du Bourguet (p.86) these fragments can be found in Amélineau pp. 410 line 10 to 414 line 4.
 - 2 There are very faint echoes of a Pharaonic text usually known as the *Tale of the Eloquent Peasant* from the time of Nebkau (c.2100 BC), which consists of a series of remonstrations by a farmer before a leading official (who relays his eloquent complaints to the king) about property high-handedly seized from him by a minor official, cf. W. Simpson *Literature of Ancient Egypt* (2003) pp. 25ff.
 - 3 An interesting use of the plural where one might expect the singular. Since the remark is addressed to Flavian, it seems reasonable to conclude that the person referred to was of the same cultural or ethnic background as Flavian.

[CN] ΟΜΟΙΩΣ ΝΗΝΑΖΡΝΦΛΑΥΙΑΝΟC ΠΖΗΓΕΜΩΝ
ΖΗΠΤΡΕΦΕΙ ΨΑΡΟΝ ΜΗΤΕΡΤΑΖΙC

ΛΙCΩΤΗ ΕΤΒΕΤΕΚΜΗΤΡΗ

[CNA] ΝΖΗΤ ΝΘΕ ΕΤΡΚΙΡΟΟΥΨ ΖΑΠCΟΟΥΤΗ
ΕΚΖΑΡΕΖ ΕΝΝΟΜΟC ΝΔΙΚΑΙΟΝ · ΑΥΩ ΕΚΜΕ
ΝΖΑΠ ΗΜΕ · ΛΙΡΑΨΕ ΕΜΑΤΕ ΕΜΑΤΕ ·
ΕΤΒΕΝΕΝΤΑΚΤΜΤΟΝ ΝΑΥ ΑΝ ΗΜΑΤΕ · ΑΛΛΑ
ΧΕΚΝΑΕΥΦΡΑΝΕ ΗΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΝΖΟΥΘ ΖΗΝΝΑΙ ·
ΕΨΧΕΝΡΩΜΕ ΓΑΡ ΝΤΑΥΧΙΤΠΕ ΝΜΜΗΤΨΑΝΖΤΗC
ΗΠΝΟΥΤΕ · CΕΡΑΨΕ ΕΧΗΝΝΕΤΕΙΡΕ ΗΠΔΙΚΑΙΟΝ ·
ΖΩCΤΕ ΝCΕCΜΟΥ ΕΡΟΟΥ · ΕΙΕ ΕΡΕΠΧΟΕΙC
ΠΕΧ̄C ΙC ΝΑCΜΟΥ ΕΡΟΟΥ ΝΟΥΗΡ ΑΥΩ
Ν̄Γ̄Τ̄ΕΟΟΥ ΝΑΥ · ΕΑΚΧΙΘΕ ΝΟΥΑΡΧΗ ΕΒΟΛ
ΖΙΤΗΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΑΑΚ ΝΡΗΜΑΟ ΝΖΗΤC ΖΝΖΕΝΖΒΗΥΕ
ΕΝΑΝΟΥΟΥ · ΟΥΝΘΟΜ ΓΑΡ ΗΜΟΚ ΕΡΖΑΠ ΝΙΜ
ΝΔΙΚΑΙΟΝ · ΠΖΩΒ ΕΤΕΟΥΝΖΑΖ ΝΟΥΧΕ ΗΜΟC
ΕΠΑΖΟΥ ΗΜΟΟΥ ΕΤΒΕΖΟΜ̄ · ΟΥΠΕ ΠΕΧΡΗΜΑ
ΕΤΘ ΝΝΟC ΝΖΟΥΘ ΕΤΡΕΠΡΩΜΕ ΤΖΗΥ
ΝΤΕCΦΥΧΗ · ΝΑΨ ΝΧΡΗΜΑ ΠΕΤΗΠΨΑ ΗΜΟC ·
ΕΨΧΕΟΥΝ ΡΩΜΕ ΕΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΠΕΤΘ ΗΜΗΤΡΕ
ΧΕΕΝΕΟΥΝΤΑCΖΕΝΤΒΑ ΝΧΡΗΜΑ ΑΥΩ ΖΕΝΑΖΘ
ΗΝΟΥΒ

[CNB] ΖΙΖΑΤ ΝΕCΦΝΑΤΑΑΥ ΖΑΤΕCΦΥΧΗ ·
ΝΤΗΤΨΡΠ ΔΕ ΑΝΟΝ ΝΝΕΤΕΝΟΥΝ ΑΝ ΝΕ · Η
ΝΤΗΤΠΖΑΠ ΖΑΔΩΡΟΝ · ΝΝΑΨΩΠΕ ΝΤΒΑΙΗΥ
ΝΟΥΗΡ· ΤΩ ΕΤΩ ΝΝΕΤΕΠΕΥΟΥΨΠΕ CΨΟΥΖ
ΕΖΟΥΝ ΝΖΕΝΧΡΗΜΑ ΖΙΧΗΠΚΑΖ · ΜΗΝΕΤΨΛΗ
ΕΤΡΕΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΟΥΩΝ ΕΠΖΗΤ ΝΟΥΟΝ ΝΙΜ
ΕΤΕΟΥΝΤΑΥ ΗΜΑΥ ΝΤΕΙΖΕΛΠΙC ΕΤΡΕΥΨΩΠΕ
ΝΡΕΤ ΑΥΩ ΝCΕCΩΤΕ ΝΤΕΥΦΥΧΗ ΕΝΖΟCΟΝ

[250] Similarly before Flavian the governor when
he came to us with his retinue.

I have heard of your Wisdom,⁴

[251], how you care for uprightness, observing
just laws and loving true judgements.⁵ I am
extremely glad not only for those to whom you
have given great satisfaction but glad also that
you will thereby greatly please God. For if those
who have tasted the mercy of God rejoice over
those who do what is just in such a way that they
are blessed, Christ Jesus will bless them all the
more and glorify them. Since you have received
authority from God, use it to enrich yourself with
good works, for you are able to make all just
judgements, a matter which many reject in favour
of money. What is of greater value than that a
man benefits his soul ? Is there anything of
greater value than the soul ? If there is a man of
whom God bears witness that, if he had copious
wealth and treasures of gold

[252] and silver, he would give them for his soul,
whereas we seize what does not belong to us or
give judgement for gifts, how damned will we
be !⁶ What a difference there is between those
whose wish it is to gather wealth on earth and
those who pray for God to open the heart of
everyone who has this hope⁷ that they may

4 This is a title cf. du Bourguet p. 95

5 The principle expressed here seems to be that 'uprightness' has to be understood in terms of just and true 'laws' (for which Shenoute is able to use the Greek (ΝΟΜΟC) and the Coptic (ΖΑΠ) words)

6 Allusion to Matth. 16, 26, which informs the whole of this passage.

7 Of acquiring worldly wealth

ΕΟΥΝΤΑΥ ΜΜΑΥ ΜΠΒΙΟΣ ΜΠΙΚΟΣΜΟΣ · ϚΣΗΖ
 ΓΑΡ ΧΕΠΣΩΤΕ ΝΤΕΥΨΧΗ ΜΠΡΩΜΕΠΕ
 ΤΕϚΜΝΤΡΗΜΑΟ · ΑΛΛΑ ΤΕΤΟΥΣΩΟΥΖ ΜΜΟΣ
 ΕΖΟΥΝ ΖΝΟΥΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗ · ΑΥΩ ΤΕΤΟΥΣΣΩΟΥΖ
 ΜΜΟΣ ΑΝ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΖΝΟΥΑΝΟΜΙΑ · ΝΕΤΕΟΥΝΤΑΥ
 ΝΤΕΖΟΥΣΙΑ ΕΡΠΖΑΠ ΑΥΩ ΟΝ ΕΟΥΝΤΑΥ Ε†
 ΜΠΖΗΚΕ · ΠΩΟΡΠ ΝΑΓΑΘΟΝΠΕ ΕΖΑΡΕΖ ΕΠΖΑΠ ·
 ΑΥΩ ΠΕΤΚΟΣΜΕΙ ΜΜΟϚΠΕ ΠΝΑ · ΠΙΣΝΑΥ ΓΑΡ
 ΝΖΩΒ ΝΚΕΦΑΛΛΑΙΟΝ ΑΥΩ ΝΑΝΑΓΚΑΙΟΝ ΣΕΘ
 ΝΚΛΟΜ ΕΧΗΝΕΥΕΡΗΥ · ΠΝΑ ΑΥΩ ΠΖΑΠ ·
 ΠΕΤΖΑΡΕΖ ΜΕΝ ΕΠΖΑΠ · ΕΝϚΗΝΑ

become givers and save their soul, all the more as
 they have the life of this world.⁸ For it is written
 that the salvation of the soul of man is his wealth.
 But it is the wealth that is gathered justly and not
 the wealth that is gathered unjustly that have the
 power to dispense judgement and to give to the
 poor. The first good is to observe the law, and the
 adornment of the law is mercy. The two principal
 and essential things crown each other, mercy and
 the law. He who observes the law

[ΣΝΓ] ΔΕ ΑΝ ΕΟΥΝΤΑϚ · Η ΝΤΟϚ ΕϚΝΑ
 ΕΝϚΖΑΡΕΖ ΑΝ ΕΠΖΑΠ ΕΟΥΝΤΑϚ ΜΜΑΥ
 ΝΤΕΖΟΥΣΙΑ · ΕϚΘ ΝΘΕ ΝΟΥΒΑΝΑΖ ΕΡΕΤΕϚΘΙΧ
 ΜΕΝ ΜΜΟϚ · ΑΛΛΑ ΝΣΣΟΥΤΩΝ ΑΝ · ΑΣΡΘΩΒ ·
 ΕΤΕΠΑΙΠΕ ΧΕΟΥΝΝΟΥΒ ΟΥΝΖΑΤ · ΟΥΝΖΟΜ†
 ΟΥΝΕΖΟΥΣΙΑ · ΑΛΛΑ ΜΗΝΑ ΝΖΗΤϚ · ΑΣΡΘΩΒ
 ΓΑΡ ΝΘΙΤΕϚΘΟΜ ΕΝΑ ΑΥΩ ΕΡΖΑΠ · ΝΘΕ ΔΕ
 ΝΟΥΒΑΛΕ ΕΤΕϚΟΥΕΡΗΤΕ ΣΝΤΕ ·
 ΕΡΕΝΕϚΟΥΕΡΗΤΕ ΜΕΝ ΜΜΟϚ ΕΝϚΕΩΝΟΟϚΕ
 ΔΕ ΑΝ · ΤΑΙΤΕ ΘΕ ΝΝΕΤΕΟΥΝΑΥ Ε† · ΑΥΩ
 ΟΥΝΤΑΥΤΕΖΟΥΣΙΑ ΕΡΠΖΑΠ · ΝΣΕΝΑ ΑΝ · ΟΥΔΕ
 ΝΣΕΕΙΡΕ ΑΝ ΜΠΖΑΠ · ΝΙΜ ΜΕΝ ΠΕΤΕΝϚΜΕΖ
 ΑΝ ΜΜΝ†ΨΑϚΤΕ ΜΠΕΜΤΟ ΕΒΟΛ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ ·
 ΑΝΡΗΝΟΒΕ ΓΑΡ ΤΗΡΗ · ΑΥΩ ΤΗΨΑΑΤ ΜΠΕΟΟΥ ·
 ΑΛΛΑ ΚΑΝ ΜΑΡΝΣΑΖΩ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΝΙΝΟΘ ΝΝΟΒΕ
 ΧΕΚΑΣ ΚΑΝ ΝΤΗ†ΖΗΥ ΕΠΚΕΚΟΥΙ ΝΑΓΑΘΟΝ
 ΕΤΝΝΑΨΘΜΘΟΜ ΝΑΑϚ · ΕΡΨΑΝΤΕΓΡΑΦΗ ΧΟΟΣ
 ΧΕΖΑΡΕΖ ΕΠΝΑ ΜΗΠΖΑΠ · ΖΟΤΑΝ ΝΨΑΝΚΑΠΠΕ

[253] and has no mercy when it is possible for
 him to show it⁹ or does not observe the law when
 it is possible for him to do so is like someone
 maimed who has a hand but one that is not
 extended. It becomes weak, that is, he has gold,
 silver, bronze and power, but no mercy. His
 ability to be merciful and just is enfeebled. Just
 like a cripple who has two legs but is unable to
 walk, so are those who are able to give and those
 who are able to dispense justice but have no
 mercy, nor do they execute the law. Who is there
 who is not full of sins before God ? We have all
 sinned and lack glory. Nevertheless, let us reject
 these great sins so that we might also perhaps
 benefit from this small good that we are able to
 do. If the Scripture tells us to be merciful and
 just¹⁰ whenever we reject

[ΣΝΔ] ΘΟΟΥ ΝΣΩΝ ΕΡΕΠΑΙ ΝΑΨΩΠΕ ΝΑΝ ·

[254] wickedness, this will happen us. For sin

8 Du Bourguet interprets the text : '... they have what makes the life of this world.' (... ils possèdent *ce qui fait* la vie de ce monde.)

9 This is a paraphrase of the much simpler Coptic ΕΟΥΝΤΑϚ: '... though he has it...'

10 Hosea 12, 6

ἦΜΟΝ ψΑΡΕΠΝΟΒΕ ΤΑΚΟ ἦΠΕΤΝΑΝΟΥÇ
 ἦΠΡΩΜΕ ΝἦΜΑÇ ΝἦΘΕ ΝΟΥΖΟΛΕ ΖἦΟΥΖΟΕΙΤΕ
 ΑΥΨ ΟΥÇΝΤ ΖἦΟΥΨΕ · ΝΕΤΛΟΚΙΜΑΖΕ ΓΑΡ
 ἦΠΟΥΨ ἦΠΝΟΥΤΕ · ΣΕΝΟΕΙ
 ΧΕΕΨΑΝΤἦΚΑΚΕΠΕΤΝΑΝΟΥÇ ἦΠΟΥΑΑÇ ·
 ΕΥΚΩ ΔΕ ΝΨΟΥ ἦΠΝΑ ΜἦΠΖΑΠ ΣΕΨΑΑΤ
 ἦΠΤΗΡÇ· ΕΡΨΑΝΟΥΑ ΔΕ ΧΟΟΣ ΧΕΨΜΕ
 ἦΠΧΟΕΙΣ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΖἦΠΕÇΖΗΤ ΤΗΡÇ ·
 ΜἦΤΕÇΦΥΧΗ ΤΗΡÇ · ΜἦΤΕÇΒΟΜ ΤΗΡÇ ·
 ΜἦΝΕÇΜΕΕΥΕ ΤΗΡΟΥ · ἦΠÇΜΕΡΕΠΕΤΖΙΤΟΥΨÇ
 ἦΤΕÇΖΕ · ΝΨΕΝΑἦΖΟΥΤÇ ΑΝ · ΑΥΨ ΚΑΝ
 ΕΑΥΤΑΝΖΟΥΤÇ ΖΙΤἦΖΕΝΡΩΜΕ · ΝÇἦΖΟΤ ΑΝ
 ΕΝΕΖ ἦΝΑΖἦἦΤΕΝΤΟΛΗ · ΑΥΨ ΠΧΟΕΙΣ ΕΤΖΩΝ
 ἦΜΟÇ · ΠΝΑ ΓΑΡ ΜἦΠΖΑΠ ΕΥΧΙ ΕΖΟΥΝ
 ΕΠΕΤΖΙΤΟΥΨἦ · ΑΥΨ ΠΕΤΖΑΡΕΖ ΕΡΟΟΥ
 ΟΥἦΒΟΜ ἦΜΟΝ ΕΧΟΟΣ ΧΕÇΜΕ
 ἦΠΕΤΖΙΤΟΥΨÇ · ΑΥΨ ΟΥἦΒΟΜ ΕΤΑΝΖΕΤΤΑΓΑΠΗ
 ΕΖΟΥΝ ΕΠΝΟΥΤΕ · ΕΡΨΑΝΠΡΩΜΕ ÇΠΡΟΟΥΨ
 ἦΠΝΑ ΜἦΠΖΑΠ ΝΕÇΕΙΡΕ

destroys the goodness of man together with the
 man himself, like a moth in a garment or a worm
 in wood. For those who test the will of God
 understand that if they fail to do good¹¹ and
 abandon mercy and justice, they lack everything.
 If someone says that he loves the Lord God with
 his whole heart and soul and thoughts and does
 not love his neighbour like himself, he will not
 not be trusted, even if he is trusted by people, he
 is never trusted before the commandment and the
 Lord who orders it. For mercy and justice are
 related to our neighbour. He who observes them
 is able to say that he loves his neighbour and to
 keep alive the love of God. If man cares for
 mercy and justice and does

[CNE] ἦΠΕÇΠΕΤΝΑΝΟΥÇ ÇΨΗΠ · ΕÇΨΑΝΟΒΨÇ
 ΔΕ ΕΠΝΑ ΜἦΠΖΑΠ ΕΟΥΝΒΟΜ ἦΜΟÇ ΕΑΑΥ · ΟΥ
 ΜΟΝΟΝ ΧΕΝÇΨΗΠ ΑΝ · ΑΛΛΑ ἦΝΕÇΡΒΟΛ
 ΕΠΑΡΙΚΕ ἦΝΕΓΡΑΦΗ · ΜΑΡΕÇÇΨΤἦ
 ΕΠΕΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ ΕÇΧΨ ἦΝΝΑΙ ΕΤΒΗΗΤÇ ΑΝ ·
 ΑΛΛΑ ΕΤΒΗΗΤἦ · ΧΕΕἦΝΑΑΖΕΡΑΤ ΖΙἦΗ ἦΧΟΕΙΣ
 ΖἦΟΥ ἦ ἦΤΑΨΩΠ ΕΡΟἦ ἦΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΕΤΧΟÇΕ · ἦ
 ΕἦΝΑΨΤΑΖΟÇ ΖἦΖΕΝΒΛΙ ἦ ΖἦΖΕΝΜΑÇΕ
 ἦΟΥΡΟΜΠΕ · ΕΝΕΠΧΟΕΙΣ ΝΑΨΟΠἦ ΕΡΟÇ
 ΖἦΨΟ ἦΟΕΙΧΕ · ἦ ΖἦΤΒΑ ΝΖΙΕΙΒ ΕΥΚΙΨΟΥ ·
 ΝΕἦΝΑΨΠΕ ἦΝΑΜἦΤΨἦἦΜΙÇΕ
 ΖΑΤΑΜἦΤΨΑÇΤΕ · ΠΚΑΡΠΟÇ ἦΖΗΤ ΖΑΠΝΟΒΕ
 ἦΤΑΨΥΧΗ · ΑΥΤΑΜΟΚ ΠΡΩΜΕ ΧΕΟΥΠΕΤΝΑΝΟΥÇ
 ΑΥΨ ΧΕΟΥΠΕΤΕΡΕΠΧΟΕΙΣ ΨΙΝΕ ΝΨΩÇ
 ἦΤΟΟΤἦ ἦÇΑΤΡΕΚΕΙΡΕ ἦΠΖΑΠ ΜἦΤΔΙΚΑΟÇΥΝΗ ·
 ΑΥΨ ΝἦΜΕΡΕΠΝΑ · ΚΝΑΥ ΧΕΕΨΨΕ ἦΟΥΗΡ ΦΑΠ
 ΑΥΨ ΠΝΑ · ΧΕΚΑÇ ΕΡΕΠΕΝΚΕΠΕΤΝΑΝΟΥÇ
 ΨΩΠΕ ΕÇΨΗΠ ἦΝΑΖἦἦΠΠΝΟΥ

[255] the good that he can, he is acceptable. But
 if he forgets mercy and justice, when he can
 perform them, not only is he not acceptable, but
 he will not escape the censure of the Scriptures.
 Let him hear the prophet¹² who says these things
 not for his sake but for ours: “With what am I to
 stand before the Lord ? Or receive to myself the
 High God ? Will I be able to reach him with burnt
 offerings or one-year old calves ? If the Lord
 were to receive me to him with thousands of rams
 or tens of thousands of fattened sheep, I would
 sell my first-borns for my sins, the fruit of the
 breast for the sin of my soul. You have been told,
 man, what is good and what the Lord requires of
 you, namely that you perform just and righteous

11 A paraphrase. The somewhat obscure passage ΕΨΑΝΤἦΚΑΚΕΠΕΤΝΑΝΟΥÇ ἦΠΟΥΑΑÇ might be rendered more
 faithfully 'if they do not leave what is good also without having done it . . .' Du Bourguet discusses the passage
 on p.97

12 Du Bourguet (p.98) suggests Micah 6, 8 as the source of this extended quotation.

acts and love mercy.” You will see how fitting justice and mercy are so that our good work too is acceptable before God.

[CNC] ΤΕ · ΚΑΝ ΑΠΕΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ ΡΩ ΣΕΚΠΖΩΒ
 ΕΧΩΩ ΜΠΙΜΑ ΑΥΩ ΑΦΕΙ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΟΥΤΩΝ · Η
 ΑΦΤΑΖΩ ΝΜΜΑΝ ΖΩΣ ΕΨΧΕ ΝΤΟΦΠΕ ΑΝΟΝ
 ΖΗΠΕΤΝΕΙΡΕ ΜΜΟΦ · ΕΦΟΥΩΨ
 ΕΤΡΕΠΕΝΑΓΑΘΟΝ ΕΦΟΡΧ ΑΥΩ ΕΦΧΗΚ ΕΒΟΛ
 ΕΦΡΑΝΑΦ ΜΠΧΣ · ΑΥΩ ΕΠΙΠΝΑ ΝΟΥΩΤ
 ΝΨΑΝΖΤΗΦ ΑΥΩ ΟΝ ΝΡΕΦΨΩΨΤ ΕΒΟΛ
 ΠΕΤΨΑΧΕ ΖΗΝΕΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ · ΑΥΩ ΖΗΝΕΤΟΥΑΛΒ
 ΤΗΡΟΥ · ΣΟΠ ΨΑΥΣΕΚΝΕΝΝΟΒΕ ΕΧΩΟΥ ΖΩΣ
 ΕΝΟΥΟΥΝΕ · ΣΟΠ ΕΤΒΕΤΕΝΜΗΤΑΤΩΤΗ
 ΨΑΨΩΨΤ ΕΒΟΛ ΕΥΚΩ ΜΠΕΝΣΝΟΦ ΕΖΡΑΙ
 ΕΧΩΝ · †ΖΤΗΤΗ ΝΤΩΤΗ ΕΝΕΓΡΑΦΗ ΑΥΩ
 ΤΗΝΑΕΙΜΕ ΕΠΕΤΝΧΩ ΜΜΟΦ · ΣΟΠ
 ΧΕΝΕΝΑΝΟΜΙΑ ΓΑΡ ΝΖΗΤΗ ΑΥΩ ΑΝΕΙΜΕ
 ΕΝΕΝΝΟΒΕ · ΑΝΡΨΑΦΤΕ ΑΝΧΙΒΟΛ · ΑΝΛΟ
 ΕΝΟΥΗΖ ΖΙΠΑΖΟΥ ΜΠΕΝΝΟΥΤΕ · ΑΝΧΩ
 ΝΖΕΝΧΙΝΒΟΝΣ ΑΥΩ ΑΝΡΑΤΩΤΗ · ΑΥΩ ΟΝ
 ΧΕΑΝΠΛΑΝΗ ΑΝΨΩΠΕ ΝΘΕ ΝΝΙΑΚΑΘΑΡΤΟΣ ΤΗ

[256] The prophet also¹³ indeed drew the matter to himself here. He came among us or rather he became, as it were, one of us¹⁴ in what we do, wishing our good to be confirmed and perfect and pleasing to Christ as well as to the same merciful and severe Spirit that speaks through the prophets and all the saints. Sometimes they draw our sins to themselves as if they were their own and sometimes, because of our disobedience, they are severe, placing our blood upon ourselves. Pay attention to the Scriptures and you will understand what we are saying. Sometimes our sins are in us and we know what they are. We have sinned and lied and ceased to be followers of God. We have uttered iniquities and been disobedient. We have all been like the unclean.

[CNZ] ΡΝ · ΝΑΙ ΜΝΙΚΟΟΥΕ ΕΥΧΩ ΜΜΟΟΥ
 ΕΤΒΗΗΤΗ · ΑΥΩ ΕΤΒΗΗΤΟΥ ΑΝ · ΖΕΝΑΤΝΟΒΕ
 ΓΑΡΝΕ · ΑΥΩ ΜΠΟΥΣΑΖΩΟΥ ΕΒΟΛ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ
 ΕΝΕΖ · ΕΑΝΟΝ ΝΤΟΦΝΕ ΝΡΕΦΧΙΝΒΟΝΣ
 ΝΡΕΦΧΙΒΟΛ · ΑΥΩ ΝΡΕΦΡΝΟΒΕ ΜΠΟΝΗΡΟΣ
 ΕΝΚΩΤΕ ΝΣΑΠΕΘΟΥ ΕΕΙΡΕ ΧΙΝΤΕΝΜΗΤΚΟΥΙ ·
 ΑΥΩ ΕΤΙ ΟΝ ΤΕΝΟΥ ΜΠΠΠΩΛΩ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΖΗΤΟΥ ·
 ΨΑΝΤΕΝΕΨΑΧΕ ΑΠΕΙΛΕ ΕΡΟΝ · ΧΕΝΕΤΗΝΟΒΕ
 ΑΖΕΡΑΤΟΥ ΝΤΕΤΗΜΗΤΕ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ · ΑΥΩ
 ΧΕΕΤΒΕΝΕΤΗΝΟΒΕ ΑΦΚΩΤΕ ΜΠΕΦΖΟ ΕΒΟΛ
 ΜΜΩΤΗ ΕΤΜΝΑ ΝΗΤΗ · ΑΥΩ ΧΕΝΕΤΗΒΙΧ ΓΑΡ
 ΤΟΛΜ ΝΣΝΟΦ · ΝΕΤΗΤΗΗΒΕ ΖΗΖΕΝΝΟΒΕ · ΝΑΙ
 ΜΝΖΕΝΚΟΟΥΕ ΕΥΧΩ ΜΜΟΟΥ ΕΥΚΩ ΜΠΕΝΣΝΟΦ
 ΑΥΩ ΠΕΝΚΡΙΜΑ ΕΖΡΑΙ ΕΧΩΝ · ΕΥΧΩ ΝΑΝ ΝΤΜΕ

[257] These and other things are said of us and not of them. For they are sinless and have not turned away from God. We on the other hand are iniquitous and mendacious and wicked sinners who have been seeking out havoc to wreak since childhood. And even now we have not broken away from these things until these words threaten us. “For your sins stand between you and God. And because of your sins he has turned his face away from you to not be merciful to you. For your hands are polluted with blood and your

13 ΚΑΝ 'even if' makes little sense and is probably to be read as ΚΑΙ 'and'
 14 ΖΩΣ ΕΨΧΕΝΤΟΦΠΕ ΑΝΟΝ 'as if he were us'

ἸΘΕ ἸΨῆΜΜΟ · ΧΕἸΝΝΑΧΟΟΣ ΧΕΖΕΝΧΑΧΕ ·
ΟΥΚΕΤΙ ΓΑΡ ΕΤΡΕΥΧΟΟΣ ΧΕΑΝΟΝ ΑΥΩ
ΖΕΝΡΩΜΕ ἸΑΤΣΩΤῆ ἸΑΝΟΝ ΟΥΑ · ΖΕΝΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΥ
ΝΕ ΝΕΤΕΡΕ

[CNI] ΝΙΨΑΧΕ ΝΑΧΩΚ ΕΒΟΛ ΕΧΩΟΥ
ΧΕΝΕΤῆΨΑΛΗ ΑΥΩ ΝΕΤῆΜῆΤΝΑ ΑΥΒΩΚ ΕΖΡΑἰ
ΕΟΥῤΠΜΕΕΥΕ ΝΗΤῆ ἸΠΕΜΤΟ ΕΒΟΛ ἸΠΝΟΥΤΕ ·
ΖΕΝΤΑΛΛΙΠΩΡΟΣΝΕ ΝΕΤΕΡΕΝΙΨΑΧΕ ΝΑΧΩΚ
ΕΒΟΛ ΕΧΩΟΥ ΕΤΒΕΝΕΥΜῆΤΑΣΕΒΗΣ · ΝΘΕ
ἸΝΤΑΠΧΟΕΙΣ ΧΟΟΣ ΕΤΒΕἸΡΩΜΕ ἸΣΟΔΟΜΑ ·
ΧΕΠΑΨΚΑΚ ἸΣΟΔΟΜΑ ΜῆΓΟΜΟΡΡΑ ΑΨΕΙ ΕΖΡΑἰ
ΨΑΡΟἰ · ΕΤΒΕΝΕΤΕΡΕἸΡΩΜΕ ΔΕ ῤΖΩΒ ΝΑΥ
ἸΧΙΝΧΗ · ΧΕΕΙΣΠΒΕΚΕ ἸΝΕΡΓΑΤΗΣ ἸΤΑΥΩΖῆ
ἸΝΕΤῆΣΩΨΕ · ΠΕΝΤΑΤΕΤῆΖΟΥΡΩΟΥ ἸΜΟϞ
ϞΧΙΨΚΑΚ ΕΒΟΛ ΑΥΩ ἸΑΨΚΑΚ ἸΝΕΝΤΑΥΩΖῆ
ΑΥΒΩΚ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΕΜΜΑΧΕ ἸΠΧΟΕΙΣ ΣΑΒΑΨΘ ·
ΕΤΒΕΝΕΤϞΙ ΔΕἸΝΕΤΕΝΟΥΟΥ ἸΝ · ΧΕΑΝΑἰ ΒΩΚ
ΕΖΟΥΝ ΕΜΜΑΧΕ ἸΠΧΟΕΙΣ ΣΑΒΑΨΘ · ΑΥΩ
ΧΕΝΕΕΤΕΤΝΑΟΥΩΖ ΜΑΥΑΤΗΥΤῆ ΖΙΧῆΠΚΑΖ · Η
ΜῆΒΕΡΩΜΕ ΝΑῤΖΩΒ ΕΕΙΩΖΕ ΕΙΜΗΤΙ
ΕΡΕϞΤΩΡῆ · ΕΡΨΑΝΝΕΓΡΑΦΗ ΧΟΟΣ ΧΕ
ΑΠΧΙΝΒΟΝῆ ΜΕΖΠΚΑΖ ΤΗΡῆ · ΑΥΩ ΧΕΑΨΑΨΑἰ
ΖΙΧῆ

[CNO] ΠΚΑΖ · ἸΤΑϞΤΟΥΩ ἸΝ ΕΖΡΑἰ ΖῆΠΚΑΖ ·
ΑΛΛΑ ἸΝΟΝΕ ΝΤΑΝΜΑΖῆ ἸΧΙΝΒΟΝῆ · ΖΙΤΩΡῆ ·
ΖΙΧΩΜ · ΖΙΣΝΟϞ · ΖΙΠΟΝΗΡΟΝ ΝΙΜ ΝΘΕ
ΕΤΧΗΖ · ἸΣΑΒΗΛ ΓΑΡ ΧΕἸΤΕΤῆ ΖΕΝΣΑΒΕΕΥ ·
ΑΥΩ ΧΕΤΑΓΑΠΗ ΨΑϞΙ ΖΑΖΩΒ ΝΙΜ ΜῆΨΑΧΕ ΝΙΜ
ΕΤΕΡΕΠΕΨῆ ΝΑΧΟΟΥ ἸΝΕϞΨΒΕΕΡΕ ΝΑΜΕ
ΖῆΠΧῆ · ΕΜΜΟΝ ΣΝΑΨΩΠΕ ἸΤΕΤῆΜΕΣΤΩἰ

fingers with sin.”¹⁵ These and other things are said when they make us responsible for our blood and judgement and speak the truth to us as strangers, not to say enemies. For no longer let it be said that we and other disobedient people are one. Blessed are those upon whom these

[258] words will be carried out, “for your prayers and acts of mercy have become your memorial before God.”¹⁶ Wretched are those upon whom these words will be carried out because of their acts of impiety, as the Lord said about the people of Sodom: “The cry of Sodom and Gomorra has come up to me”¹⁷ and, about the things people work for no remuneration¹⁸: “As for the wages of the workers who have harvested in your fields, he whom you have deprived cries aloud, and the cries of the those have harvested ascend to the ears of the Lord Sabaoth.”¹⁹ And as for those who take what is not theirs, “will you live alone on earth” or “there is no-one else to work the field except for robbers.” If the Scriptures say: “The entire land has been filled with violence, and it has increased”

[259] it has not grown from the land but it is we who have filled the land with iniquity, rapaciousness, pollution, blood and every evil, as it is written, unless you are wise and love is at the basis of every deed and every word that friends

15 The quotations are from Isaiah 59, 2-3

16 Acts 10,

17 Gen. 18, 20

18 χινχη

19 James 5,4

εἶχῳ ἡ̅μο̅ς ἡ̅ναἰ̅ · καὶ γὰρ ἡ̅τε̅ρι̅χε̅τ̅ε̅
 ἡ̅νο̅υ̅ϱ̅ε̅ρ̅ ε̅λ̅ει̅ ψ̅α̅ρον̅ ε̅ρη̅π̅ ε̅νε̅τ̅η̅χω̅ρα̅ ·
 εἶψα̅χε̅ ἡ̅μ̅α̅ς̅ κα̅τα̅πε̅τε̅ψ̅ε̅ εἶχῳ̅ ἡ̅α̅ς̅
 ἡ̅ναἰ̅ ἡ̅ἡ̅ν̅ι̅κο̅ο̅υ̅ε̅ · ο̅υ̅ μ̅ο̅νο̅ν̅ χ̅ε̅λ̅ψ̅α̅χε̅
 ψ̅ο̅π̅ε̅ ε̅ρ̅ζ̅ο̅ρ̅ῳ̅ ἡ̅α̅ς̅ ἁ̅γ̅ῳ̅ ἡ̅ϱ̅ο̅υ̅α̅ψ̅ῳ̅ ἁ̅ν̅ · ἁ̅λ̅λ̅α̅
 ϱ̅ῤ̅π̅κε̅ς̅μ̅ε̅ ε̅ροἰ̅ ἡ̅π̅ρ̅η̅γε̅μ̅ων̅ καὶ γὰρ
 ἡ̅π̅ι̅χε̅λ̅α̅α̅ ἡ̅π̅ε̅λ̅ ἡ̅π̅ε̅τ̅η̅ς̅ ἡ̅ἡ̅τε̅γ̅ρα̅φ̅η̅ ·
 ἡ̅α̅λ̅λο̅ν̅ δ̅ε̅ ἡ̅ἡ̅νε̅φ̅α̅λ̅μο̅ς̅ · χ̅ε̅π̅λ̅η̅ν̅ ἡ̅ψ̅η̅ρ̅ε̅
 ἡ̅ἡ̅ρ̅ω̅μ̅ε̅ ψ̅ο̅υ̅εἰ̅τ̅ · ἡ̅ε̅ν̅νο̅υ̅χ̅νε̅ ἡ̅ψ̅η̅ρ̅ε̅ ἡ̅ρ̅ω̅μ̅ε̅
 ἡ̅ἡ̅ε̅ν̅ἡ̅α̅ἡ̅β̅ε̅ς̅ ἡ̅χ̅ι̅ν̅δ̅ο̅ν̅ · ἡ̅ἡ̅το̅ο̅υ̅
 ε̅υ̅ἡ̅νε̅υ̅ε̅ρ̅η̅ ἔ̅βο̅λ̅ ἡ̅ἡ̅τ̅μ̅ἡ̅τε̅π̅ρα̅ · ἡ̅π̅ῤ̅

say to each other truly in Christ. Indeed it will
 happen that you hate me for saying this. For
 when I said the truth to a fellow citizen, a
 countryman of yours came to us and I spoke to
 him as is fitting, saying these and other things.
 Not only did he find what I said burdensome to
 him and he rejected it, but he also complained of
 me to the governor. I have said nothing outside
 the Scriptures. Rather in the Psalms²⁰ it says:
 “But the sons of men are vain and mendacious
 with unjust necks, striking each other without
 cause.²¹ Do not put

[C̅N̅Ξ̅] ἡ̅α̅ἡ̅τε̅ ε̅χ̅ι̅ν̅δ̅ο̅ν̅ · ἡ̅π̅ῤ̅κα̅ἡ̅τ̅η̅τ̅ἡ̅
 ε̅τ̅ω̅ρ̅π̅ · ο̅υ̅μ̅ἡ̅τ̅ρ̅ἡ̅μ̅α̅ο̅ ε̅ς̅ψ̅α̅ν̅εἰ̅ ἡ̅π̅ῤ̅κα̅ἡ̅τ̅η̅τ̅ἡ̅
 ε̅ρο̅ς̅ · χ̅ε̅κ̅α̅ς̅ δ̅ε̅ ἡ̅ἡ̅νε̅λ̅α̅α̅ ἡ̅ω̅π̅ ε̅ρ̅ω̅τ̅ἡ̅ ·
 ἡ̅ἡ̅α̅τ̅α̅μ̅ω̅τ̅ἡ̅ ε̅νε̅ν̅τ̅α̅ϱ̅ι̅β̅ο̅λ̅ ε̅ρο̅ν̅
 ἡ̅ἡ̅ἡ̅το̅υ̅ · ἁ̅γ̅ῳ̅ ἡ̅ἡ̅α̅τ̅α̅β̅ω̅τ̅ἡ̅ ε̅νε̅ν̅τ̅α̅ν̅ς̅ἡ̅ἡ̅σο̅υ̅
 ἡ̅α̅ς̅

[260] your hopes in iniquity or trust in
 rapaciousness. If wealth comes, do not trust it.”
 So that nothing will be hidden from you, I will
 tell you about the matters in which he has lied
 against us and inform you about what I have
 written to him.²²

20 Ps. 62, 10ff.

21 I have followed the translation of du Bourguet. However, the LXX can be translated as: 'false are the sons of men, to do wrong with balances; they together are from vanity' (cf. the English of Albert Pietersma in <https://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/24-ps-nets.pdf>). I prefer du Bourguet's rendering of the Coptic, largely because it seems to make sense.

22 Implies that this opening statement is to be followed by less public discussions.