“Me, This Wretched Sinner”:  
A Coptic Fragment from the Vision of Theophilus  
Concerning the Flight of the Holy Family to Egypt

Alin Suciu  
Hiob Ludolf Zentrum für Äthiopistik  
Alsterterrasse 1  
20354 Hamburg  
Germany  
alin.suciu.1@ulaval.ca

Abstract  
The *Vision of Theophilus* is one of the important apocryphal narratives concerning the  
flight of the Holy Family to Egypt. Although the text is known to survive in Arabic,  
Ethiopic and Syriac, a lost Coptic original has long been accepted by scholars. The pres-  
ent paper introduces a hitherto unidentified fragment from the Coptic version of this  
text. The fragment came from the White Monastery in Upper Egypt and it is currently  
kept in the National Library in Paris. The fragment is edited in this article together with  
its Arabic and Ethiopic parallels.

Keywords  
Coptic, Holy Family, *Vision of Theophilus*, Christian apocrypha, White Monastery,  
manuscripts

Among the works pseudonymously attributed to Theophilus, patriarch  
of Alexandria from 385 to 412, has been preserved a sermon that is of  
fundamental importance for the study of the apocryphal traditions con-  
cerning the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt (*Sermo de ecclesia s. Familiae  
in Monte Qusqam* = CPG 2628; CANT 56). This text is known to survive in  
Arabic, Ethiopian and Syriac. I shall present here a previously unidentified  
Coptic fragment which is, until now, the only direct witness of the sermon  
attributed to Theophilus in this language. For the purpose of the present  
article, I will first introduce Ps-Theophilus’ homily, spelling out its basic
ideas and reviewing the different forms and versions in which it has been transmitted.

It appears that the text sprung from a local tradition according to which, during the flight to Egypt, the Holy Family visited the town of Qosqam (modern al-Qusiya).\(^1\) Even today, pilgrims from all over Egypt are gathering in the nearby monastery, named Deir al-Muḥarraq (أخبار المحرق),\(^2\) to celebrate the sojourn of the Holy Family in that place. This pilgrimage site was so renowned that it inspired the Abyssinians to call Dabra Qwǝsqwam a church which was built by the middle of 18th century in the north-west of Gondar.\(^3\)

The homily mentions that the emperor Theodosius the Great sent the patriarch Theophilus in Upper Egypt to confiscate the treasures of the pagan temples and to use them for building churches. On his way back to Alexandria, Theophilus stops to pray in the Monastery of the Virgin in Qosqam. During the night, the patriarch has a vision, in which Virgin Mary recounts to him the sojourn of the Holy Family in Egypt for three years, five months and three days. According to the author, this number would correspond to the period spent by the woman in the wilderness in the allegory of Revelation 12:6. The last station of the Holy Family before their return to Bethlehem was “the mountain of Qosqam,” a toponym obviously meant to legitimize the monastic settlement of Deir al-Muḥarraq, which is called elsewhere in the text the “holy mountain.”\(^4\)

---


4) In Greek, Coptic and Arabic Christian monastic sources of Egyptian provenance, both literary and documentary, the words ὄρος (or πέτρα) / ⲫⲡⲟⲟⲩ / ل٠٠٠١ are meant to designate the monastic establishments. For example, the colophons of the Sahidic manuscripts from the
embeds various literary *topoi* which appear as well in the Protoevangelium of James, the Arabic Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew and other apocryphal nativity and infancy narratives: it introduces the midwife Salome as companion of the Holy Family to Egypt; the encounter between the Holy Family and the two thieves which shall be crucified later with Jesus; the statues of the idols of Hermopolis Magna (al-Ashmunein), which fell down and broke to pieces when the child Jesus passed them; the tree which bowed down to worship Christ; the miraculous powers of the spring in which the divine child was bathing. At the end of the vision, Mary informs Theophilus that Deir al-Muḥarraq is situated on the same site where the first church in the world had been consecrated by Christ. In this church, Jesus Christ himself celebrated the first mass on the 6th of Hator (November 2). The sermon ends with a note allegedly written by Cyril of Alexandria, who claims to be the one who wrote down Theophilus’ words.

The Vision of Theophilus is part of the Coptic cycle of the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt.5 This cycle includes other homilies by Ps-Timothy

---

Aelurus,\textsuperscript{6} Cyriacus of Behnesa,\textsuperscript{7} and Zacharias of Sakha.\textsuperscript{8} Being the case that the Vision of Theophilus was translated in several vernacular languages, that it is often quoted in the later sources and that it served as a model for other texts in the same cycle, it can be suggested that it must have been quite popular, first in Egypt and afterwards in Ethiopia and Syria. In this sense, Anne Boud’hors and Ramez Boutros pointed out that the discourse of Ps-Timothy Aelurus on the flight to Egypt and the consecration of the Church of the Rock used the Vision of Theophilus as its main source of inspiration.\textsuperscript{9} Similarly, our text was used by other authors as well. For example, it is mentioned in the Egyptian synaxary in the note for Hator 6. The synaxary refers to our text, saying that on this day Christ travelled with his disciples to Qosqam, “the place of the first mass,” as Philotheos (=Theophilus) and Cyril of Alexandria have written.\textsuperscript{10} Talking about Deir al-Muḥarraq, the author(s) of the History of Churches and Monasteries quotes, in his turn, the discourse on the flight to Egypt attributed to Theophilus.\textsuperscript{11} Besides, there is evidence that the homily penetrated also into the liturgical sources. Youhanna Nessim Youssef investigated the rite of consecration of


\textsuperscript{7} Two homilies on the flight to Egypt have survived in Arabic under the name of Cyriacus of Behnesa. The Arabic text is available in درا لابئس (Cairo, 1902) 73-95; second edition, with the same title, published in Cairo, 1927, 106-139. Abstracts in P. Dib, “Deux discours de Cyriaque évêque de Behnésa sur la Fuite en Égypte,” Revue de l’Orient chrétien 15 (1910) 157-161. Cf. also G. Graf, Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur vol. 1 (Studi e testi, 118; Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica, 1944) 232-234.

\textsuperscript{8} Arabic text in درا لابئس, 39-55; second edition, 56-81. Abstract and list of manuscripts in Graf, GCAL 1, 228-229. The Arabic text was republished more recently in ميا مير وعجاب الاعدرا (second edition, Deir al-Surian, 2005) 26-38. According to the introduction to this volume, the first edition appeared in 1974. However, I have not been able to find it. Check also U. Zanetti, “Matarieh, la sainte famille et les baumiers,” Analecta Bollandiana 111 (1993) 21-68.

\textsuperscript{9} Discussing the homily of Ps-Theophilus, Boud’hors – Boutros, “La Sainte Famille à Ğabal al-Ṭayr,” 65, remark: “Il est tout à fait évident que l’homélie de Timothée est construite sur le même modèle. La composition est analogue, le récit de la Vierge est quasiment identique.”

\textsuperscript{10} R. Basset, Le synaxaire arabe jacobite (rédaçon cope) vol. 2: Les mois de Hatour et de Kihak (Patrologia Orientalis, 3/3; Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1909) 255 [179].

the Church of Qosqam, which draws heavily upon Ps-Theophilus' sermon, and the reminiscences which this text has left in the liturgical books of the Copts. All these sources testify to the prominence that the Vision of Theophilus must have once enjoyed.

The homily on the flight to Egypt by Ps-Theophilus of Alexandria survived in two main recensions—one long and one short—preserved in Arabic, Ethiopian and Syriac. In addition, some Arabic manuscripts offer yet a third recension of the text. The short recension, which survived in Arabic and Ethiopic, contains only the revelation of Mary to Theophilus, being obviously an excerpt from the longer one. The Ethiopic text was edited and translated into English in 1900 by Ernest A. Wallis Budge after a manuscript which was, at that time, in the collection of Lady Meux. It is interesting to remark that the Ethiopic short recension is included in some compilations of the so-called Miracles of Mary (ተአምراء፡ማርያም፡). The Arabic version of the short recension was published in 1921 by Michelangelo Guidi after Vaticanus arabicus 170 (18th century).

The Ethiopic text of the long recension was edited and translated into Italian by Carlo Conti Rossini in 1912. Several years later, Michelangelo Guidi edited the Arabic and the Syriac versions of the same recension after two manuscripts in the Vatican, Borgianus 128 (dated 1720 AD) and

---


Vaticanus arabicus 698 (dated 1371 AD). For his part, Alphonse Mingana republished, under the title “Vision of Theophilus,” the Syriac text from two manuscripts in his private collection and Borgianus 128, unaware that the latter was already edited some years before by Guidi. Besides, Mingana mentioned also two Garšûnî manuscripts of the Vision of Theophilus which were in his possession, although he did not use them for the edition. The long Syriac version of the discourse of Ps-Theophilus on the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt belongs to a compilation titled History of the Virgin in six books (CANT 95), which begins with the Protoevangelium of James and closes with the Dormition of Mary.

We can discern with some degree of confidence the redactional relationships between the various versions mentioned above. Thus, the Syriac

---


19) A. Mingana, “The Vision of Theophilus, or the Book of the Flight of the Holy Family into Egypt,” Bulletin of the John Rylands Library 13 (1929) 383-425; reprinted in Idem, Woodbrooke Studies vol. 3 (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1931) 1-92. Description of the Mingana Syriac manuscripts in A. Mingana, Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts vol. 1: Syriac and Garshûnî Manuscripts (Woodbrooke Catalogues, 1; Cambridge: Heffer & Sons, 1933) 19-20, 134. Another Syriac manuscript, unnoticed by Mingana when he prepared his edition of the Vision of Theophilus is signaled in Ibidem, 1040. Mingana obtained some years later fifteen leaves from an Arabic manuscript of the same work; see the description of this manuscript in A. Mingana, Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts vol. 2: Christian Arabic Manuscripts and Additional Syriac Manuscripts (Woodbrooke Catalogues, 2; Cambridge: Heffer & Sons, 1936) 23 (= no. 18). The edition of this manuscript is forthcoming; see J.P. Monferrer-Sala, “The Copto-Arabic Fragment of the Visio Theophili in the ‘Mingana Collection.’ A Contribution to the Study of the Textual Tradition.” I should like to thank Dr. Monferrer-Sala, who kindly sent me his paper before its publication.

20) Description in A. Mingana, Catalogue of the Mingana Collection 1, 101-102, 277-278.


and the Ethiopic translations were both made from Arabic. For the Syriac, Mingana supplied some good arguments, indicating that the version displayed “distinct Arabic words which could not have crept into the Syriac text except through an Arabic original.”\(^{23}\) As for the Ethiopic version, Conti Rossini suggested that the translation from Arabic into Ge’ez was made around the 14th century, under Abba Salama II, perhaps in Deir al-Muḥarraq.\(^{24}\) In that period, in the Qosqam monastery was settled a community of Ethiopian monks. Moreover, a note in an Ethiopic manuscript (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS Et. 32), dating from the reign of the Negus Saifa Ar’ed (1344-1372), mentions that an Abyssinian monastery dedicated to the apostles existed near Qosqam.\(^{25}\) With regard to the Arabic version, it has been accepted almost unanimously that it represents the translation of a lost Coptic original. This is suggested, inter alia, by the colophon of one of the surviving Arabic manuscripts, which says that the translation of the homily of Ps-Theophilus was made from Coptic at the demand of a superior of the Monastery of the Virgin, known as Deir al-Muḥarraq.\(^{26}\)

However, no Coptic manuscript, neither complete nor fragmentary, of the sermon of Ps-Theophilus on the flight of Holy Family to Egypt has been found until now. Those fragments that were signaled in the past were wrongly attributed to the Vision of Theophilus, following a confusion made by Walter Ewing Crum between Ps-Theophilus and Ps-Timothy (Aelurus).\(^{27}\)

\(^{23}\) Mingana, “Vision of Theophilus,” 4. See the examples supplied by Mingana on pp. 4-6.


\(^{27}\) In Crum—Bell, Wadi Sarga, 7 n. 2, Crum mentioned the fragments Paris BnF Copte 131\(^{5}\), foll. 101-104 and 132\(^{1}\), fol. 22 as “remnants of Timothy’s sermon on the church at Koskam.” It seems that this confusing information was taken over in S. Gero, “Apocryphal Gospels: A Survey of Textual and Literary Problems,” in ANRW 2.25.5 (1988) 3969-3996, at 3984 n. 82; MacCoull, “The Holy Family Pilgrimage,” 987; Davis, “A Hermeneutic of the Land,” 335 n. 11; C. Horn, “Apocryphal Gospels in Arabic, or Some Complications on the Road to the Traditions about Jesus,” in J. Frey – J. Schröter (eds.), Jesus in apokryphen Evangelienüberlieferungen. Beiträge zu außerkanonischen Jesusüberlieferungen aus verschiedenen Sprach- und Kulturtraditionen (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 254;
As a matter of fact, the first fragment of the Vision of Theophilus in Coptic surfaced while I was trying to identify a series of small parchment fragments kept in the collection of the National Library in Paris. Upon inspection, the fragment BnF Copte 1318, fol. 80 revealed some portions from Ps-Theophilus’ sermon in the Sahidic dialect of Coptic. The fragment, originally part of a codex, was written in two columns. However, only the vestiges of the lower part of a column survived on each side. As with the majority of the Sahidic parchment fragments in the Bibliothèque Nationale, BnF Copte 1318, fol. 80 once belonged to the Monastery of Apa Shenoute (also called the White Monastery), situated in Upper Egypt, near Atripe. The age of this small manuscript fragment is difficult to discern, on the one hand because the little amount of surviving text, which does not allow a proper paleographical inspection, and on the other because the dating of literary Coptic manuscripts is usually problematic. However, a 10th to 11th century date seems probable.

It is somewhat remarkable that the fragment in question is placed in the volume BnF Copte 1318, a modern miscellany that brings together various disparate fragments from the White Monastery codices, between a fragment (fol. 79) from a sermon on the Cross and the Good Thief attributed to the same Theophilus (CPG 2622; clavis coptica 0395), and another one
BnF Copte 1318, fol. 80r
(fol. 81), which belongs to the sermon of Ps-Timothy Aelurus on the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt (CPG 5491; clavis coptica 0416). The fragments are not paleographically related and they are coming from different manuscripts. However, although the three fragments have elements in common, I think that their consecutive arrangement in the volume BnF Copte 1318 is nothing else than a fortuitous coincidence. Émile Amélineau, the one who organized the Bibliothèque Nationale fragments from the Monastery of Atripe in thirty-nine thick volumes at the end of 19th century, could not have known their identity being the case that, with the sole exception of BnF Copte 1318, fol. 79, they belong to texts which had been published only later.32

Returning now to the homily on the flight to Egypt which interests us here, it must be pointed out that the text of the Paris fragment belongs to a part of the sermon which precedes the vision of Theophilus. Thus, it logically comes from the long recension since the short one omits this section of the text.

The recto (hair side of the skin) contains twenty-one damaged lines of the left-hand column. Only a few traces of letters, mostly illegible, have survived on the second column. The legible text of the better preserved column offers the concluding remarks of an allegorical interpretation of Revelation chap. 12. The author tries to show that the woman with the child, who is persecuted by the dragon and takes refuge in a mountain, corresponds to the episode of the flight of Mary and Jesus to the “holy


31) See note 6 supra.

32) On the other hand, as the anonymous reviewer of the present paper remarked, the possibility that Amélineau actually knew the identity of the three fragments cannot be totally ruled out. Indeed, he had access to the Arabic version of the Vision of Theophilus in the manuscripts BnF arabe 73 and BnF arabe 155. See G. Troupeau, Catalogue des manuscrits arabes. Primaire partie: Manuscrits chrétiens vol. 1: N°s 1-323 (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1975) 134, 131. However, none of the three fragments is identified in Amélineau’s Catalogue des manuscrits coptes de la Bibliothèque nationale (1890), deposited at the Département des manuscrits orientaux of the National Library of France.
The woman who gave birth to the child who shall rule the nations with a rod of iron is the representation of Mary. The sun, the moon and the crown of twelve stars which adorns her head are Christ, John the Baptist, and the twelve apostles, respectively. The dragon who attacks the woman is Satan, while the water cast out of his mouth is the anger of Herod, which led to the massacre of the innocents. The first undamaged lines on the recto of BnF Copte 1318, fol. 80 read ⲡⲇⲣⲁⲛ ⲉⲧⲁϥⲧⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲇⲓⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥⲧⲁⲡⲣⲟ ⲡⲉ ⲙⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥⲧⲁⲡⲣⲟ ⲡⲉ ⲙⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲧⲁϥⲧⲟⲩⲛⲟⲥⲏⲥ ⲙⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲧⲉ ϩⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥⲧⲁⲡⲣⲟ ⲡⲉ ⲙⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲧⲉ ϩⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥⲧⲁⲡⲣⲟ ⲡⲉ ⲙⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟⲟ ⲛⲧⲁϥⲧⲟⲩⲛⲟⲥⲏⲥ ⲙⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟⲟ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟⲟ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟⲟ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟⲟ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟⲟ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟⲟ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟoins ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postponos ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛɑ postpone
Finally, it is interesting to note that the name of the speaker is not revealed, the author calling himself, in an act of humble obedience, “me, this wretched sinner.” If the Arabic and the Ethiopic versions harmonize with the Coptic text at this point, the Syriac version offers a different lectio: “me, the wretched and the sinner Theophilus (ܬܐܘܦܝܠܘܣ).” Had our Coptic fragment contained the same variant, it would have supplied an important clue which could make its identification to occur much earlier. But “bet than never is late.”

Edition of BnF Copte 131⁸, fol. 80

---

TRANSLATION:

*recto:* [...] apostles (ἄποστολος) [...] [...] their pure preaching [...] everyone [...] the knowledge of truth. The dragon (δράκων) which stands behind her is the Devil (Διάβολος). The water that he cast out of his mouth is the pestilence (λοιμός) which he incited against her through the impious (ἀστεβής) Herod. The battle (πόλεμος) which he stirred up [...] 

*verso:* [...] of the Devil (Διάβολος) and all the [...]. What shall I say to you [...] O, Jesus, my Lord [...], or (ἤ) what shall I give you in recompense for all these favors that you have done to me, this wretched (ἐλάχιστος) sinner? You granted me your divine body (σῶμα) and your holy blood in order to give it to the people (λαός) [...] 

ARABIC TEXT AND TRANSLATION:39

هما بأيامين الرسل هولا الإذن من قبل بشراهم الطاهر تقد كر إحدى معرفة الحق
والثنين الذي وقف خلفها يوشع التبان والماء الذي قذفة من فاتة خلفها فهوا الا ضطهد
الذي من قبل هودس والرب الذي القا (على ساربسلها) [...] 
جميع المنافقين الديانة وكل الاحتباس للعين
وماذا القول عنك واحد خالك يا كرامة وماذا الاعلم عوض هذه الكرامات التي أعطيتي
ها القلير الحاضي. أعطيتي جسدك الألهي وقدمك الطاهر عطاية لشبعك
 [...those are our fathers the apostles, through their pure preaching everyone approached to the knowledge of truth.] The dragon who stood behind her is Satan. The water which he spit out of his mouth towards her is the persecution which came out of Herod. The war which he cast (against all her offspring) [...] all the satanic illusions and everything that the Devil cares about. What can I say about you and how can I praise you with honor? What is the reward of these honors which you gave me, the wretched sinner? You grant me your holy flesh and your pure blood in order to give them to your people ...

ETHIOPIAN TEXT AND TRANSLATION:40

[^40]: Ethiopic text taken from Conti Rossini, “Il discorso su Monte Coscam,” 405.
(… the apostles, through whom the nations entered the way of truth.) The dragon behind her was the Devil. The water spilled out from his mouth is the anger that came out of Herod. The battle which he cast (against her relatives …). […] (all the tricks of the Devil and the troubles of this world). What shall I say and how shall I reward the Lord of Glory, who made all this for me, the wretched and the sinner, to him who granted me his holy flesh and pure blood in order to give [them] to the people …