

The Coptic versions of the  
Investiture of the Archangel Michael

English translation

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The Sahidic and Fayyumic versions of this text were once part of the library of the monastery of the Archangel Michael at Hamûli in the Fayyum, which contained about 20 texts datable to the 9th cent. produced in a nearby scriptorium at Toutôn.<sup>1</sup> In the early 1900s the library was rediscovered in relatively unsanitary conditions and is now in the possession of the Pierpont Morgan Library.

The Sahidic text bears the number M 593 and contains the texts of the investitures of Michael (ff. 1- 30) and Gabriel (ff. 31 - 50). A text with the same title is known to have circulated earlier, perhaps in the second half of the 6th cent. The Fayyumic text, M 614, contains an incomplete version of the investiture of Michael but a complete version of that of Gabriel. The text translated here is the Sahidic text of Michael. Folio 51 contains a colophon that tells us who copied the text, who paid for the copy and who received it.<sup>2</sup> The following is a translation of that colophon following the subdivisions of Lantschoot:

(A) *The book of the Investiture of the holy Archangel Gabriel has come to an end. His holy blessings be with us. Amen.*

(B) *Please, everyone who reads this book, pray for our God-loving brother Theodore, for he is responsible for it. He gave it to the monastery of the Archangel Michael of the hills<sup>3</sup> for the salvation of his soul that the holy archangels Michael and Gabriel might obtain favour with God on his behalf that He might forgive his sins as on the day he was born into the world and bless him with the blessing of the heavens together with his wife and children and all his property and grant His blessing and peace to his house all the days of his life and write his name in the Book of Life and repay his promises one hundredfold in heavenly Jerusalem, the city of all the saints. Amen. Let it be.*

(C) *Bless me and forgive me, my cleric fathers who read this book. Pray for me, please, that God may grant me knowledge, I John the singer, the brother of the deacon Mena of Toutôn. Support me. Perhaps my attention has slipped and I have made mistakes. I have written according to the copy in front of me.*

(D) *A.M 609*

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1 According to E. Amélineau *Géographie Copte* (1895) pp. 527ff. Toutôn was well-known for the quality of its calligraphers.

2 A. van Lantschoot *Receuil des colophons des manuscrits chrétiens d'Égypte* 1 (1929) pp. 35-37

3 Coptic: **ϢΑΝΤΑΥ** cf. CD 441b

The translation has been made from the published texts,<sup>4</sup> based principally on the Sahidic text in vol. 31, but with reference from time to time to the Fayyumic version. The Fayyumic text breaks off on p. 84 of Müller's publication, and only the Sahidic text continues to the end of the *Investiture*. Since the present is intended to be no more than a relatively simple translation, all I can do is to recommend the reader to consult Müller's study. There is, however, one story from the Apophthegmata worth quoting that illustrates how guarded monks were (or were advised to be) in their dealings with 'angels':<sup>5</sup>

*The devil changed himself into the form of an angel of light and appeared to one of the brothers and said to him: 'It is I Gabriel, who have been sent to you.' The brother replied: 'You have been sent to one of the other brothers, for I am unworthy.' Thereupon the devil disappeared.*

Attention may also be drawn to texts in Nubian and Greek dealing with this topic, which are discussed by A. Tsakos in "The *Liber Institutionis Michaelis* in Medieval Nubia" *Dotawo: Journal of Nubian Studies* 1 (2004) pp. 51-62. Tsakos emphasizes the importance of Greek over Coptic in Medieval Nubia, and this may confirm the use of the form **ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΙΑ** in a Coptic letter written by a Nubian: Copts always use the form **PAKOTE**.<sup>6</sup>

I have taken the liberty of reducing a certain amount of direct speech to indirect speech (e.g. in § 3). The Coptic verb **ΟΥΩΟΥΒ** is used extensively in the text: after a question it clearly means 'answer', but after a statement it is little more than a sort of 'discourse marker', which I have usually translated by the conjunction/time adverb 'then'. I have followed the section numbering system of Müller, which appears to be connected with his above-mentioned monograph. The numbers in brackets are those of the Coptic manuscript text. Müller's numbers in the margin of his translation refer to the numbers of his printed text. I have used some of Müller's notes in both the text and translation volumes, but by no means all of them. Occasionally I translate the F text because it seems less convoluted and better structured than S. This is indicated in the notes simply by F.

Müller summarizes the content of the text on p. vi of the text volume, and I will paraphrase his summary here. The scene is the Mount of Olives and Jesus is instructing his disciples about the creation of the world, angels and men. The archangel Saklatabôth<sup>7</sup> defies the Creator by refusing to honour Adam. Michael is thus

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4 C. Detlef Müller *Die Bücher der Einsetzung der Erzengel Michael und Gabriel* [CSCO 2256 and 226. *Scriptores Coptici* 31 and 32] (1961). Two years before this he published a study of the subject in *Die Engellehre der koptischen Kirche* (1959)

5 G. Steindorff *Koptische Grammatik* (1904) p. 2\*

6 Grace M. Crowfoot and F.L. Griffith "On the early use of cotton in the Nile Valley" *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 20 (1924) pp. 5-12.

7 This name may be based on and originate from **ܣܟܠܐܒܘܬ** (e.g. 1 Sam. 1,3), essentially the military title of an honourable angel. When the angel became dishonourable, the name may have 'morphed' into something equally disreputable, such as a conflation of the word **ܣܟܠܐ** (*sakla*, which seems to mean something like 'stupid' in Syriac) and

chosen as his replacement. A certain amount is said about the archangel, and the rest of the text is devoted to the answers of the Saviour to questions posed by the apostles.

The longest section in the text is 17, subdivided into ten parts, that deal essentially with the same topic: Michael introduces and presents a soul to the Saviour, followed by a formulaic exchange between the two that varies, in which the Saviour, despite his prior knowledge insists that Michael say who the soul is.. The only section in which this does not happen is 17(f).

*1. These are the words, revered and full of benefit, spoken by Our Lord Jesus Christ to his holy disciples and apostles on the Mount of Olives. He spoke to them of the creation of heaven and earth and of how man was*

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**בַּהְתָּא** (*bahta*), both Aramaic words connected with 'confusion'. As a non-Semitist I make this suggestion very tentatively.

created in his image and likeness and of how he invested the Archangel Michael on the 12th Hathor <sup>8</sup>and this was interpreted by John the Evangelist and loved one of God. In the peace of God. Amen.

2. When the good Saviour ascended the Mount of Olives with his holy disciples and apostles, he remained there for many days, instructing them about the creation of heaven and earth and the creation of the aeons<sup>9</sup> of light. Because they asked him about everything, he concealed nothing from them. After eight days the disciples of John came to him and asked him: "Our Lord Jesus, it was Herod's birthday yesterday. He held a large dinner for his great servants. After they had become drunk, the daughter of Herodias danced in the midst of the drinking party. (2) Herod swore to her: 'Whatever you wish, ask it, unto half my kingdom.' She replied: 'Let me ask my mother.' The devil preceded her and spoke with her mother: 'Tell your daughter that she should ask for the head of John the Baptist who is in prison, for he is seeking to estrange Herod from you.<sup>10</sup> Because he says that is not possible for you to take your brother's wife and defile his bedchamber. If you are not prepared to send and quickly kill him, he will estrange king Herod from you.' After the devil had said this to her mother, he disappeared. At that moment the mother sent her small depraved daughter to dance in the midst of the drinking party, and it filled her with empty glory and charisma. The king said to the girl: 'What is your request?' The lawless girl replied: 'King, I want you to bring me the head of John the Baptist on a plate so that your magnates may see it.' The king was very sad. but because of the oaths and his companions he ordered it to be given to her. He sent three *speculatores*<sup>11</sup> and they removed John's head, put it on a plate and brought it and placed it in the midst of the drinking party. Herod ordered (3) it to be given to her, and she took it and gave it to her mother. We took his body and buried it. The head was not given to us. We then came to you, Our Lord, to tell you everything and tell you about the state of the Baptist's body and about the head that had been removed from his body." The Saviour, when he heard this, was very grieved at heart and wept with his disciples. He said: "Go and fetch the body in all decency,<sup>12</sup> for I have appointed ten thousand angels to watch over his body and the place where it is put. Great miracles and wonders will happen in that place. I have sent a multitude of angels to remove the head from that lawless creature."<sup>13</sup> They went in accordance with the word of Our Saviour Jesus Christ. He spent many days on the Mount of Olives grieving over John (4) the Baptist.

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8 The entry in the Synaxary (ed. and tr. R. Basset in *Patrologia Orientalis* 4 (1907) pp. 279 ff. mentions as Michael's first intervention into human affairs the support he gave Joshua in overcoming the Amalekites.

9 As Müller points out, this can refer to 'eternity' or a 'period of time', but since the term is constructed with 'of light' it probably refers to a concept that is beyond human understanding. G.W. H. Lampe *Patristic Greek Lexicon* (1961) devotes five columns to the word

10 F

11 The extended meaning here: 'executioners'

12 Gk. *καλῶς*

13 Pronoun

3. Peter replied: "Lord, there is a small matter on my mind that I want to tell you. When I want to say it to you, other words jostle with each other in my mouth because of the joy you give me, and I forget what it is I wish to say. Nevertheless, with a blessed mind, a joyful tongue and a humble soul, I will ask you this time. Jesus, my strength, Jesus my Saviour, Jesus my life, Jesus the light of my eyes, Jesus the bread of life that has come from heaven to give a life for everyone, Jesus the fragrance of those who have died in sin, hear us."

The Son of Light<sup>14</sup> replied: "My beloved Peter and my beloved Father, everything you wish to ask about, nothing will be concealed from you about the creation of heaven and earth." Peter replied: "I wish to know, Lord, what these great tribulations are that have happened in the world and these acts of oppression and violence, backbiting and curses, strife, false oaths and sin of every sort? Do all these things exist because of man or Mastêma?<sup>15</sup> The one of whom you said that you had driven him from (5) heaven and he fell to the earth? The one who gave these problems to earth so that men might find them? So why did you create him, knowing that all this would happen because of him? I hear that he is original sin and that it was he who caused Adam our father to be expelled from Paradise. Who has been ruling in his place from the start? For the whole world is in danger because of Mastêma the enemy." Jesus said: "My beloved Peter, listen and I will tell you everything. First we created heaven, then the angels. The Father established the aeons. We created seven archangels to continuously sing our praises, those of myself and my Father and the Holy Spirit. The first of our creations was Saklatabôth, which means the one who shakes heaven and earth. We made him commander-in-chief of all the armies we created. There were seven cherubim with him, singing the praises of the Holy Perfect Trinity, that is myself, my Father and the Holy Spirit. The angels called him the first creature of the hands of God. (6) We then created the second angel and called him Michael, followed by Gabriel, Raphael and the rest, and my Father with me and the Holy Spirit, in which this great loftiness of spirit resides.<sup>16</sup> My Father looked upon the whole world we had created. He saw that he found nothing that would bless him. My Father said to me: "Let us create a man in our image and likeness and place him in the world we have created." So we created man and breathed life into his face with a living breath. Man became a living soul. My Father said to me: "This man whom we have created, there will be great sorrow because of him and error and he will be lost." I said to my Father: "I will redeem<sup>17</sup> him." My Father said to me: "If I know that he has destroyed the spirit that I put into his mouth and nostrils, I will send my powers

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14 F. 'Saviour'

15 The name means 'hatred', and referred at one time to an angel that persecuted evil, but, by the time of the Book of Jubilees, had become the leader of those demons that were born from a union between fallen angels and women.

16 F. S is corrupt.

17 **ὑποσπασθήσεται**: 'I will be his surety' (CD 425b). F of this passage is a little more elaborate than the S.

and they will take him and his body will disintegrate and he will become earth as he was before. I will prepare rivers of fire and cast his soul into them and boil it so that the period it spends in the world sinning, it will spend it in the fire (7) until it is pure." I said to my Father: "I will save him. I will answer for him. I will make him return to know you. If I know that he has been disobedient and perished, I will go down if you wish and shed my blood for him until I rescue him and his children." When my Father heard this eulogy from my mouth, he took hold of him and blessed him. At that moment fruits grew upon his body, hair on his head and a beard, like fragrant henna bushes, and all the other limbs of his body. My Father blessed him, saying; You will receive the blessing that it may be a blessing for all who come into the world." We then planted a garden eastward of Eden. We placed the man we had created in it, saying: "Work in it, watch over it." We gave him a commandment to eat from every tree in the garden except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, "for on the day when you will eat from it you will die." After this my Father said to me; "It is not good that man (8) remain alone. Let us make for him a helpmate who is like him." We then brought sleep upon him, and he slept. We took one of his ribs and replaced it with flesh. We built the rib that we had taken from him and made it into a woman for him. My Father said to him: "You will be called Adam because I have created you in my likeness and my image and <that of> my Son and the Holy Spirit." When Adam saw the woman, he was filled with the prophetic spirit and said: "This is bone from my bone and flesh from my flesh, the one who is to be called woman, for she was taken from man.<sup>18</sup> For this reason man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they will be as one flesh." Adam called his wife Zoe,<sup>19</sup> that is, the mother of all the living. They continued to be in the garden together, and the angels attended them, admiring the beauty and glory of the human beings. My Father then called Adam, and Adam replied: "Bless me, my Father." On the first (9) day when Adam worshipped, not a single angel remained in heaven or on earth, but they all came<sup>20</sup> and cried out: "Amen, amen." My Father said to the angels, the archangels, the Seraphim and Cherubim, the Twenty-Four Elders and the entire angelic host: "Come, let us worship Adam, my likeness and image." They all answered and said: "We will worship him, our Lord and king." The heavens opened<sup>21</sup> and a great fragrance came upon Adam. They worshipped him saying: "Blessed are we, who are worthy to see you, image of our king. Amen."

After they had all worshipped, we reached the first angel created by my Father. My Father said to

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18 The basis of this wordplay is to be found in Hebrew ( אִישׁ-אִשָּׁה ) Latin was able to observe the paronomasia with 'vir-virago' and Luther followed suit with 'Mann-Männin', which went into limited German usage for a couple of centuries following Luther: J. and W. Grimm *Deutsches Wörterbuch* vol. 12, col.1593-1597. Greek was unable to do this, and the English word 'woman' derives from 'wife-man'.

19 Coptic uses both the Gk and Hebrew name in literature and in paintings. In a 4th cent. wall painting from the Christian cemetery of Bagawat (Kharga Oasis) she is called Ⲭⲟⲩⲁ and in a wall painting of the church at Abu Mena ΖΩΗ.

20 Coptic adds 'while standing'.

21 There is no verb in S, but there is one in F.

him: "Come, worship the man we have created in my likeness, my image and the work of my hands." The archêplasma<sup>22</sup> replied: "I will not worship him, for he is a man and I am before him and I am the greatest of all the angels." When the archêplasma refused to worship him, he led astray many other angels and did not let them **(10)** worship Adam. My Father said to him: "Come, worship my likeness and image." He replied that he would not and that he would not let the other angels worship him. My Father said to him: "What has come over you that you will not worship him?" The archêplasma replied that he would never worship one less than himself. My Father said: "Come, worship him. Do not bring destruction upon yourself and let your violence come upon in the middle of the head."<sup>23</sup> He still refused. My Father said; "Evil has been fulfilled in you this day, wicked Mastêma. See, my witness has been fulfilled in you, which will remain forever and become the law for all generations to come, saying: 'Through two or three witnesses every word stands.'<sup>24</sup> This is the first witness that has happened." My Father said: "Since you have become stubborn and disobedient, from this time you will not be called 'archêplasma' but Saklam the opponent of his Lord." My Father ordered one of his Cherubim, who beat him with his wings and cast him down to earth. At that point a loud noise came forth **(11)** from his nostrils.<sup>25</sup> My Father became distressed as he sat<sup>26</sup> on his throne, and the entire angelic host wept. The Saviour said to Peter: "My chosen Peter and my beloved, the Father forgives the sins of everyone except for the one who snorts through his nose because he has said to my Father: 'The breath that you have given me, I have no need of it.' The accuser was thereupon flung to the ground and the heavens rejoiced. The earth grieved and was troubled. The Saviour said to the apostles: "Since you have asked me, my holy limbs, I will conceal nothing from you."

4. John said: "My Lord, tell us what happened after the accuser had been cast down from heaven to earth: what did they do to him?" The Saviour said: "My Father banished him to the valley of chaos in the sea, and the angels whom he had deceived were made into flying demons. Those too who would put evil thoughts into the hearts of everyone, those too who desired the daughters of men,<sup>27</sup> they abandoned their glory three times, those over whom my Father grieved and wept. On the day when Adam died, the Father looked upon him and wept, saying: 'Adam, I created you **(12)** immortal, but you chose mortality. Go down to Amente and remain there until the one who has pledged security for you comes down and brings you up from there.' The second time he wept when he saw the sins of the giants, the children of the angels whom he had led astray. Their crime was

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22 This term is not in Lampe *Lexicon*. I have left it as it is.

23 This sounds like an idiom involving self-inflicted violence similar to the English 'shooting oneself in the foot' or German 'sich ins Knie schießen'.

24 Deut. 17, 6

25 Snorting: CD 544a for examples of nasal sound made by devils and magicians

26 Not in S

27 Gen. 6, 2

very grave. We brought the water of cataclysm upon them. When the water of the cataclysm destroyed people and beasts, my Father saw this and wept. The third time of his weeping (will be) the day of the completion of the aeon. When the entire world passes, my Father will order Michael to sound his trumpet on the mountain before Josophat. My Father will order the angels to come forth and put a sign on the foreheads of all sinners, that sign being as black as a sack. When that sign appears, my Father will send angels and separate them, a father taken from his son and a son from his father, mother from daughter and daughter from mother, brother from brother, husband from wife. In a word, every order (**13**) from each other. All the sinners to the left of the judge, the just to the right. There will be great weeping, the just weeping over the sinners taken to their punishment, the sinners themselves crying out with nobody to save them. The Father will arise from his throne, weeping bitterly for his creation being taken to its punishment.

This is the day when you will weep bitterly and you will be unable to find anyone to have mercy on you when you hear this sentence 'Let the sinners return to Amente.'<sup>28</sup> This is the day of grief, sighing, pain, tribulation, there being no consolation on any side.

5. Andrew replied and said: "My Lord, on what day and in what month was the devil cast out of heaven ? So that when we reach that day we can tell everyone and they can keep themselves<sup>29</sup> save them, for it will be a harder day than all others you have created." The Saviour replied: "The devil was cast out heaven on the 11th Hathor at the the 11th hour<sup>30</sup> when the sun was about to set."

6. The apostles then said to the Saviour: "Our Lord, tell us who (**14**) it was you put in his stead to sit on his throne and take the place of the wicked accuser you had cast out. Tell us how many angels there are in heaven and who is the greatest of them all, the one you promoted to the rank of archêplasma ?" The Saviour replied: "My chosen apostles, blessed are you who ask these questions. When we cast the deceitful devil out of heaven, on the 12th Hathor at daybreak, my Father ordered the angels to come into his presence and stand before the throne on either side of it. He then took a big strong angel called Michael and set him on the throne in place of the archêplasma, and all the glory taken from Mastêma was given to Michael. The light crown of joy was put upon Michael's head, the staff of truth was given to him, the sandal of truth was placed upon his feet. He was adorned in the night of (**15**) the 12th Hathor and took up his position over the light world in heaven and on earth on the 12th Hathor.

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28 Matth. 25,46

29 Müller suggests that it should be understood as 'from normal business'.

30 Approx. 5 pm



When the Blessed Virgin Mary gave birth to the light of the entire world in the morning of 29th Khoiak, a great star appeared in the east, and Michael was invested, which was the time of light. My Father then ordered the angels to come and worship Michael, to embrace him and bless with him the perfect glory. Michael sounded the trumpet of life. Not a single angel remained in heaven and on earth or in paradise, but they all came and greeted Michael with fragrance in their hands. The fragrance filled the seventh aeon of light. My Father was pleased and rejoiced, together with the Son and the Holy Spirit.<sup>31</sup> The glory and the powers danced, the Seraphim rejoiced and the Cherubim also blessed the investiture, the heavens rejoicing and celebrating. The Father then established the 24 Elders and placed them **(16)** in the church of the first-born in heaven. As they celebrate Mass in heaven, so also do they on earth. What is performed on earth is performed in heaven and the celestial regions of light, these whose thrones are in the kingdom of the perfect divinity, that is myself, my Father and the Holy Spirit. We rejoice with the heavens on this day of the year. Heaven and earth rejoice in the remembrance of the glory of Michael, the overseer of life. Those in heaven rejoice at all times and those on earth rejoice with them. Even if they find only a single loaf or a piece of clothing to give in the name of Michael, they receive many times more in the kingdom of heaven, for Michael is a good angel.<sup>32</sup> Every angel created by me was appointed to his position, those of the day and night, of the dew and the air, of the winds and the fruits, in short everything. But we put Michael over mankind that he might intercede on behalf of the image of God at all times. Michael has **(17)** nothing but prayer for the souls of men, for he is a better angel than all the others. My Father and I, as we look down on earth,<sup>33</sup> when we see the great wickedness perpetrated by men, my Father is angry and wishes to visit his wrath upon earth and exterminate them all, from man to animal. Michael hastens to take up his trumpet of thirty cubits, blows it and all the angels gather together to offer incense<sup>34</sup> and Michael prostrates himself, entreats and weeps over sinful man. The Father sees him weeping and averts his anger for his sake, because Michael never entreats the Father and the Father rejects his request, for the sun, this great servant, shines upon on earth because of Michael.<sup>35</sup> When the angels see sinful people, they are filled with fire and wish to obliterate them. Michael sees them and calls upon them, saying: 'Angels who listen, stop being angry with these people, **(18)** because the overweening devil has led them astray. Do you not see that the Father was able to lift him and hurl him to earth that he might cause this great war?' When they hear this, they feel small and say: 'Every man lives because of you, Michael. Michael is the pride, he is the leader.' Michael replies: 'You angels, the sun whom you worship, the Father, the

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31 Coptic repeats and adds to the verbs with this meaning. In total both versions use four verbs to describe the same euphoric state.

32 F

33 F

34 Lit. 'good smell, perfume'

35 F

Son and the Holy Spirit, he will make you merciful to the entire image of God, which he created in his likeness and image.' And they all respond: 'Amen.'

And now, my blessed disciples, I have told you everything. Since you are the sons of light, the light, that is myself, has told you everything." The apostles all answered; "The hour when we were created for the world will be blessed until we hear the sweetness of your divinity."

7. Peter said: "Is there a greater angel than (19) Michael?" The Saviour replied: "There is no greater angel among all the ranks I have created. Did you not see the day when I spoke to you of the glory of the Father that the Father brought all the angels into his presence and found none like Michael." Thereupon, Michael came to us, with a pearl flask in his hand full of the wine of the true vine. The Saviour said: "Arise and drink and rejoice, for this is the wine I told you about, 'I will not drink of the fruit of this vine until the day when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father.'" So we drank and rejoiced. Michael prostrated himself before the Saviour and went up to heaven in glory.

The Saviour said to us: "My holy limbs, since I have said to you that Michael is the greatest of all the angels created by us, the one placed by the Father on the chariot of light,<sup>36</sup> he surveyed the entire earth and was assigned to the seventy-two countries. It was Michael (20) who brought you out of prison, my beloved Peter. He escorted you to a desert place with Andrew.<sup>37</sup> It was he also who took you to the house of Salem, accompanied by many angels. He told you the order that I had created in the world. It was Michael who brought light to the people of God. God was angry with the people and spoke, wishing to kill them. Michael entreated him on their behalf. God heard his plea and sent rain to the people, as Jeremiah the prophet was standing there and Michael the archangel gathering all the people to him, saying: 'Come, come to the prophet of the Lord.' Look, my blessed disciples, at the mercy of the good angel and see that he spoke with the prophet Jeremiah: 'Stay here until I gather the people together.' He left a man of the flesh standing and himself, a creature without a body, went. Michael said this in accordance with the spirit and mercy in him. Behold, for seventy years this people has suffered day and night,<sup>38</sup> and so (21) I will not let them suffer any longer. As long as the merciful one was merciful to the people, he caused the prophet to enjoy the mercy<sup>39</sup> of God with the people."

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36 F

37 S adds a name 'Lekontas', which the writer of F has probably not understood and so omitted.

38 F. cf. Jer. 25, 11 - allusion to the Babylonian captivity

39 Lit. 'to be in the mercy'

**8.** Thomas then said: "I beg you, my Lord, to tell us about the angels you created: who appoints them to their tasks on a daily basis after your command, my Lord ?" The Saviour <sup>40</sup>replied and said to Thomas: "My holy limbs and fellow heirs, I will tell you all about the honour and the glory of my chosen one, Michael. All the angels, the Cherubim, the Seraphim and the powers I created, Michael has authority over them. When the power comes from the inner part of the veil, saying : 'Mediator of the testament, appoint the angels as you wish,'<sup>41</sup> Michael calls each one of them and assigns them according to the will of the Father.<sup>42</sup> He calls upon them all: 'Fiery flame angels, when you go to the world and see men in temptation **(22)** of sin, do not be angry with them and burn them, for Mastêma has led them astray, but adopt the mercy and forbearance of God.' They, the angels of glory, prostrate themselves before Michael, saying: 'Bless us, Michael the merciful and steward of all until we visit earth full of tribulation and bless us until we return to you'<sup>43</sup> lest the devil lead us astray like our companions.' Michael blesses them, saying: 'Go in peace and the God you worship will watch over you until you go to the world, the place in which the remorseless devil lives, and return in peace.' The angels leave Michael and come to the world. When they see men and women sinning, they become fiery angels intent on killing them because of the things they are doing. They speak to their leaders: 'Listening angels of light, remember the instructions our Lord Michael gave to us not to be angry with the image of God.' **(23)** Whereupon they became merciful and cried out: 'Glory to you, Michael the angel of mercy'.

**9.** Philip then said: "My Lord, I am puzzled that you say the angels are afraid when they come to earth.<sup>44</sup> What will these wretched men do ?" The Saviour replied: "Holy deacon,<sup>45</sup> let me explain to you that my Father cast him out of heaven because of the angels he mocked, he cast them out of heaven.<sup>46</sup> None of the angels was able to fight the devil except Michael. The devil was like a burden: if <sup>47</sup>you run to take up the burden and carry it, you will become a dwelling place for the devil and all his energies. If man runs away from the burden, the devil, God descends and lives in him with his angels. Angels do not come down to earth without the authority of Michael."

**10.** The Saviour then called his twelve disciples and apostles and said to the, "Come, let us go to the place of Thrake<sup>48</sup> and I will show you great weeping and the future mystery and you will see the

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40 S adds 'good', omitted by F

41 F

42 F

43 The meaning seems to be 'keep us blessed the whole time we are away'.

44 The question mark in the S and F text is out of place.

45 Probably the Philip mentioned in Acts 6,5 and 21,8 and probably not the apostle

46 F slightly different formulation but same meaning.

47 S text of this is probably a misprint.

48 Probably an abbreviated form of 'anthrax', here meaning 'coal' cf. Müller's translation p. 34.

great frankness<sup>49</sup> granted to Michael by God." We were on the Mount of Olives for (24) thirty days mourning John who had been killed by Herod. The Saviour said: "We are on this hill grieving for John, for his life was short and he was not allowed to preach the baptism of repentance. For my beloved John was like no other man born of woman. No other man like John the Baptist has entered heaven and paradise."

John the virgin said: "My Lord, how old was the Baptist when he was beheaded? We have heard from you that he was young, but before God and men he was great in his purity." The Saviour replied: "My beloved John, every time you open your mouth to speak in the midst of these apostles, it gladdens my heart to hear your voice, and the heart of my Father rejoices and he looks down upon earth and spreads his mercy over every soul. And Michael sounds his trumpet in the midst of the Cherubim of my Father because of the purity of your voice.<sup>50</sup> When my Father remembers the sins of men, he becomes angry with them and wishes to exterminate them.<sup>51</sup> Michael sounds his great trumpet and calls Ouriel (25), the angel of blessing, and he causes the hard hearts to be pliant, saying: 'Come, go to John the virgin, cast the thought into his heart that he pray with you in the presence of the Father of all for the sake of our request.' Thereupon Michael and John came and prostrated themselves and wept, imploring the good Father to be merciful and turn aside his anger because of the prayer of his servant John and Michael, the overseer of life. So, my beloved John, the day when John the Baptist was beheaded was the 2nd Thoth and he was 34,<sup>52</sup> the highest of all the righteous in my kingdom. As for Herod, his dwelling place is Amente."

**11.** As the Saviour was saying these things to the apostles, he went to an olive tree with the apostles and moved it. It bent its crown to the ground and worshipped him. The Saviour sat on the tips of its branches and he called the young disciples of the apostles and spoke to them: "Remain on the Mount of Olives, eating on the table on which I ate, until I go to the west with the disciples and instruct (26) them about the place of suffering and the work that each one has done." At that point Judas Iscariot left them and a cloud of light raised the Saviour and his disciples and set them down on a mount called Thrake. For the whole mountain was of copper and lead and the cloud set us down on the mountain. We and the olive tree were concealed by the cloud and we did not know this until the cloud of light was lifted. Our Lord blessed the olive tree; "The blessing of the Father will be with you, that is my blessing and that of the Father. Arise and fly by means of the power which is in you, for you are worthy that the king of glory reside in you with his disciples. So fly away to

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49 G. Scarpat *Parrhesia Greca. Parrhesia Cristiana* (2001) is a useful treatment of the concept in the pre-Christian and Christian worlds.

50 This sentence is not in F

51 It is difficult to see how this follows on from the previous observation.

52 This is the only text, as far as I know, that specifies an age.

your place on the Mount of Olives and take root there until the day of my kingdom, the just eating with you in my dinner of a thousand years." The olive tree flew up to the Mount of Olives and resumed its place.

When the young disciples saw the olive tree on which the Saviour had climbed return to its place, their heart was strengthened, because when the Saviour called (27) the apostles on to the olive tree, he did not call the younger disciples but left them behind. They were distressed, thinking: "Perhaps we are not worthy to ascend with the Saviour and he has separated us from them. Arise and let us go and let each one go the place he came from."

The devil appeared clothed in a garment decorated like that of an apostle and said: "You see how he, Jesus, makes sport of you. He has taken his apostles with him to a cloud and separated you from them. Since you are of little account in his view, will you not take me up<sup>53</sup>, an apostle, a long-time follower of him. When I saw that he separated me from Peter and Paul and the other companions and was humiliating me, I became angry and left him. You too, return home. This activity<sup>54</sup> of yours is vain and worthless."

When he said this to the young disciples, Biberos the disciple of John said to Polycarp the disciple of Peter and Philemon the disciple of Bartholomew: "My brothers, let us not (28) speak in this way. For God is impartial. I recall a day when the Lord said to them: 'Throw stones at the devil.' And they all threw stones at him. The only one to hit the target was that of John. That one therefore is the one who speaks with you, converting your hearts. Arise and pray together and our Lord will give us strength.' They arose and spread their hands and prayed: 'Lord Jesus, hear me. Do not let this arch-enemy prevail over us and lead your servants astray.' They spread out their hands and the devil became like a puff of air.

Bibros the disciple of John and his brothers went and seized the olive tree which the Saviour had mounted and went to the place where it had taken root and cried out: "We bless you, olive tree, which has been worthy of the great glory of transporting the king, son of the king."

Philemon the disciple of Bartholomew seized the olive tree to mount it and go to the place where the Saviour sat in order to greet him. A loud voice became audible: "Young disciples and apostles of the king of glory (29), do not be afraid, for you have been blessed by the son of Mary, the holy Virgin." A cloud concealed them until the Saviour took the revered ones to the garden of light.

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53 F 'see me'

54 Gk τεχνή

Thereupon the olive tree lowered itself, and the young ones mounted and the three greeted one another.

As they mounted the olive, there was a great fragrance in the place where it was. It struck them in the face and they received the Holy Spirit. The holy apostles of Christ then returned to them in peace. As mother lovingly takes in her children, so did the cloud to the olive tree. The names of the disciples were as follows: Polycarp the disciple of Peter; Nicanor, Rufus and Alexander, the disciples of Andrew; and Mark the disciple of James; Biberos the disciple of John; Philemon the disciple of Bartholomew, and others, 24 in all.

The Saviour then called a cloud and it came to the Mount of Thrake and seized us and the Saviour. It took us to the west and placed us on the Mount of Iron (30) glowing with fire. The fire of that mountain consumed<sup>55</sup> us so that the skin of our feet glowed with fire and threatened to curl up and fall to the ground. We apostles cried out and wept: "Jesus, son of the living God, help us. Jesus, the solace of everyone in distress. Jesus the helper of those who have no helper, may we receive your mercy. Have you brought us here to destroy us? If so, Lord, you have the power over our body and our spirit. Do not abandon us, Lord. Perhaps you are mindful of the sins we committed before we were with you, and this is why you brought us to this mountain to destroy us. We say to you, Lord, if we are saved this once from the fire, we will be able to go the world and preach everything you have done with us."

The Saviour broke into a smile as they said this. He said to them: "My holy limbs, it is for your own good that this has happened." He then blessed them and raised his hands over them. The (31) mountain stopped burning and rainclouds drew across. They felt great cool. The Saviour opened their<sup>56</sup> eyes. We the apostles looked at the mountain, we apostles, and saw an excellent large field full of all sorts of fruit, so that the apostles said: "Lord, the field we see will<sup>57</sup> be the model of the whole world."

That field was full of seas and deeps, one full of pitch, another of fiery pebbles, the colour of leeks. One was filled with an evil worm, 70 cubits deep. One was filled with a dragon, 7 cubits deep. One full of cold like arrow poison. Some were full of sticky pus like that of a uterus. One deep you will<sup>58</sup> find is 300 cubits. Another you will find has 100 vengeful<sup>59</sup> decans. We wept copiously, saying:

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55 S uses the F form of the word

56 F 'our'. The text moves without any signposting into direct speech, as if it were an aside to an audience.

57 The future tense is that of probability cf. W. Till *Koptische Grammatik* (1966) §307

58 F remains in narrative mode.

59 S has an unusual but easily recognizable form of the Greek word τιμῶρειν

'Lord, what are these painful places to which you have brought us ? Woe to us, Lord.'

The Saviour then said to us apostles: "My chosen apostles who have done the will of my good Father, these are the punishments that I have made for the sinners (32) who have forsaken me from the beginning and walked in the sins and injustices of the devil and those who have partaken of my body and blood and turned to sin and defiled pollution. The great fear you experienced and the great fire that I caused to burn your feet were to prevent you from going forth in the world, in a city or town and walking through polluted blood, because the earth is defiled by people walking on it. I have purified you, for I will not leave any place in the aeons unexplained to you."

**12.** Peter said to him: "My Lord, where are the souls being punished as we saw them already being punished ? Perhaps, my Lord, you have been merciful to them and that is why we have not seen any of them." The Saviour replied: "My beloved Peter, punishment cannot come to an end until the completion of the aeon. But this is the day when I said to you that I invested Michael over the angelic host of heaven, the 12th Hathor, and so there is not a single soul being punished today. I have given them relief because of the joy of Michael and his celebration today. Because on (33) this day Michael prostrates himself at the feet of the Lord, saying: 'Lord of all mercy, have mercy on the tears I weep today in your presence and grant for me all those who have been baptized in your name and have partaken of the body and blood of your beloved son Jesus Christ.'

At that moment my Father had mercy on the archangel Michael: he does not allow Michael to consign anyone to punishment at all on this day of the year for three days. For this reason I have brought you there today for this great celebration, which is a merciful release for all sinners. The whole world and everything I created on it, they are not loved as on three days of every year, which are a period rest for everyone. When you go back to the world, tell the sons of men: 'Struggle. Do not sleep or lie down on Michael's feast day. Be charitable to the widows and orphans. Be hospitable to strangers. Feed the hungry and give drink to the thirsty.'<sup>60</sup>

**13.** John then said: "I beg you, my Lord. I know that we have profited greatly from you, (but) we would like to know from you to which shrine (34) or place they will be taken after Michael has interceded for grace on their behalf ?" Jesus replied: "Children of light, I will tell you everything, for the light is with you. Follow me and I will instruct you." We arose and followed him. He then ordered a cloud to take us over seven rivers, on which trees growing. We saw a large expansive place and we thought it was the whole world: the souls of the just were there and those who had

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60 Matth. 10, 42

received Michael's grace and they were granted to him. He called upon the Father: "My Father, the father of my soul and every soul, I rejoice and am jubilant over those you have prepared for me. I found them chosen and blessed, their wish has been fulfilled according to the worship of the angels. I beg you, my Father, to keep them from all harm and not to allow any weakness of heart in them, for you are the strength of everyone. I wanted them, in accordance with the naming of the angels and the Cherubim, to be called apostles. So now, my Father, send Michael the archangel to me and the holy apostles will see the glory of the souls saved in his name." At that (35) moment we, the apostles, looked and saw heaven open. The heavens were revealed and our eyes stared. We saw paradise and the tree of life, and Michael was gathering in the fruits and wrapping them in garments of light. Sometimes he took crowns and put them in the hands of the angels, who kissed them. As the garments were filled, each one took wing, flew and came to settle on the feet of the Saviour and worshipped him. We saw the heavens disbursing indescribable goods. The heavens and the air were full of holy stoles<sup>61</sup> and every sort of revered garment, floating down from the seventh heaven to where the Lord was sitting with the twelve apostles. Everything was filled with every good thing before Michael came out of the aeons of light. We apostles said: "Lord, what are these souls in these places that we see ? What are these good things and cloths and garments coming here today ?" The good Saviour replied: "They are the souls that Michael has pleaded for because of charitable works (36) they performed in the world. Be patient with them a little and you will see great wonders today. If I tell you about these on earth, it is fitting that I take you to the heavens and show you everything, including those who have risen because of my chosen Michael."

14. Peter said: "We have thought so far that punishment is in heaven. We did not know that it is on earth in the west. We beg you, Lord, to tell us how it works and how it is organized." The Lord replied mercifully: "Peter, sturdy pillar in the kingdom of my good Father, Amen, I say to you, my holy limbs, my Father has not created anything evil in heaven, but since it is the world that is full of wickedness committed in it, my Father has created punishments for wrongdoers, my blessed apostles, that the sinners may be punished. When the just take leave of their body, Michael knows (37) them and embraces them and continues to comfort them with every kindness and greets them with<sup>62</sup> his mouth full of blessing. Michael the archangel then takes them to the river of living water and they start celebrating in the aeons of light, for the world is quite unworthy of them. But I will cause them to be brought to the heavens to be among their peers, that is, the powers of light, the Cherubim and the Seraphim."

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61 J. Niemeyer *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon* (1976) p. 742. Müller cites several dictionaries, but not this one. Müller also has a note in his translation (n.40), with references to 'celestial garments' in Gnostic texts.

62 F



**15.** Philip then said: "My Lord, you have honoured us greatly and concealed nothing from us. We want you to tell us about when man dies: is his body first taken to heaven before punishment or not ?" The Saviour replied: "Philip, my holy deacon, you twelve, I will tell you everything. When man completes the days assigned to him and lies down to die and give up his body, I send the angels for him. The wicked angels stand over him with the good ones. If the good find a place in him, the wicked are expelled. If the wicked find a place in him, the good **(38)** are expelled and they take him to the firmament. The gatekeepers of darkness open up for him and escort him to punishment. Woe is that man born into the world - that hour will be worse than all the time he has spent on earth.<sup>63</sup> He will transfer to the aeon of darkness, the first being the firmament. He is taken to the aeon where the fire is burning brightly, like a large river. He is ferried across. They are consumed by fire, which scorches and boils them in the great foul odour that envelops them until they reach the tribunal and worship. A voice then comes forth from within the veil: 'Take them, cast them into punishment of some sort until they pay for the sins they committed on earth. The angels of wrath take them<sup>64</sup> and hurl them into the river of fire so that they are submerged in it for twenty-four months. They are brought to the aeon of darkness, the place of the ocean, and brought to punishment to be punished and tortured for all the sins they have committed during their lifetime. Their place of **(39)** punishment will be like a machine that turns round and round.<sup>65</sup> The mercy of my Father will forgive their sins in reponse to the prayers of Michael and his army."

**16.** Andrew said: "Lord, after they have paid for their sins and you bring them out of their punishment, do you put them on earth ? Or are they taken to the aeons of light where this single sun and this single moon and these stars shine on them ? Tell us therefore, my Lord, in accordance with your charity and mercy." The Saviour replied: "My beloved Andrew, the one who is worthy to remain in this great field, he remains and is paid according to his worth. If by chance he has done a little good in the world, he is placed<sup>66</sup> in the first aeon of light and (then) the third, in short up to the seventh. And again, the one who is worthy to be taken to the first wall of Jerusalem is taken there, and so on until the twelfth.<sup>67</sup> Each one receives his due." While the Saviour was saying this, Michael came forth from the aeons of light with the twelve **(40)** legions of angels laden with all good things the glory of which was inexpressible, singing angelic hymns to the Holy Spirit. Michael said: "Rejoice, all the just, in the good things of the Saviour. Amen. The Saviour calls you and Michael serves you. Jesus prepares good things for you and Michael prays on your behalf that they

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63 Mk 14, 21

64 F

65 Not a literal translation, but the 'machine' is probably a millstone, as suggested by Oscar von Lemm cf. Müller's translation p. 56

66 F

67 Abbreviated translation

be done to you. Jesus eats with you and Michael serves you. Jesus guides you and prepares the food for the All. Michael prays for them that it may be given to them.<sup>68</sup> Jesus the king of glory appears to them in purity and jubilation. Michael rejoices with his king. Amen. It is the apostles who summon. Amen. Michael stands and serves them all. He prays over them and they give him great joy.

'Rejoice, souls of the just. Michael has come to you laden with all good things of the light, giving them to those who are charitable in his name.' As Michael was saying these things with his angels in the hymn,<sup>69</sup> they came into the presence of the Saviour. Michael said: "Hail, Lord, king of life. " The Lord greeted (41) the great strong archangel in return. Michael and his angels fell at the feet of the Lord. The Saviour said to the apostles: "This is Michael, the one I told you about, who prays night and day before my Father on behalf of everyone. Emulate him therefore and see how freely he speaks<sup>70</sup> in this place of glory."

The Lord said to Michael; "Come, go into the midst of these souls and bring out those who have been charitable to the poor, the indigent and the orphans in your name, Michael, my holy steward, so that my disciples may see how freely he speaks, because you love the humility that I love, and that is why I elevated you, because you have humbled yourself."

## 17.

(a) Michael then went into the midst of the souls and brought out a man, the angels themselves leading the way for Michael and the man. He worshipped the Saviour and the apostles. Michael said to the Saviour: "Lord, have mercy on this wretched soul who has been brought before you." The Saviour said: "What is the state of this soul?" Michael said: "My lord, you know everything about each one of them." The Saviour said to Michael: "I know everything, but I tell (42) you: 'Speak so that my chosen apostles will see the frankness and the great mercy that I will show to every soul who has come here today because of your name,<sup>71</sup> my beloved Michael.' "Michael then nodded to the man; "Arise and come here, man who has been bold enough to commit a great wrongdoing." The man arose trembling, the angels holding him and saying to him: "Do not be afraid, the Lord king of glory is here with the archangel Michael."

Michael then said to the Saviour: "My Lord, this man, Peter your apostle knows him. He was lame from birth and Peter made him walk in a city called Jerusalem. When Peter made him stand up, he said to him: 'In the name of Jesus, arise and walk.' And the man stood up and walked, giving glory

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68 F

69 F

70 F

71 F, S: 'that they may go forth in the world and preach all that has happened here today because of your name'.

to Jesus the king of glory. That day was the 12th Hathor, the day when you invested me. Accordingly, when this day comes around every year, he takes purified bread and wine and brings them to the church and gives them to the bishop (43) consecrated by Peter and celebrates the Eucharist<sup>72</sup> with them on this day of the year, the 12th Hathor. When he leaves the church, he then walks around the entrance to the church, finds three poor widows and three indigent orphans, takes them to his house to give them his best food and drink and lets them go blessing him. He says: 'I perform this small act of charity each year for the cure of my body and the salvation of my soul in the name of my Lord, Jesus Christ, the God of Peter the Holy apostle and in the name of Michael the holy archangel.' So, my Lord, three powers of light come to him every day, bringing him a table full of the good things of paradise, they and three other angels, who set the table before him while he eats from the things on it."<sup>73</sup> The Saviour then called three angels and said to them: "Angels who obey their Lord, put the soul on your wings of light and take it to paradise and baptize it in paradise, the place of baptizing the just until I take my disciples to the land of light."

(b) Another time, Michael went (44) and brought other souls. The Saviour said to him: "Speak of these things in the presence of my brothers, the holy apostles." Michael said: "My Lord, you know everything and nothing is hidden from you." The Saviour replied: "Yes, I know everything, but it is I who speak to you, my holy servant."<sup>74</sup> He said: "My Lord, this man has fathered a son whom he called Chael. He said (to him): 'When this day comes each year, I will spend a day for the poor and orphans.' I went to him in a vision and said to him: 'Sir, why have you been bold enough to give your corporeal son the name of the archangel?' He replied. 'My Lord, have mercy on me for I did it in good faith.' I said to him: 'If you wish to live, perform charitable works and your son will grow.' He continued to heed me in everything, doing great works of charity."<sup>75</sup> This is why he is here today and why the angels minister to him." The Saviour called three angels and said to them: "My angels who obey their Lord, take this soul to my kingdom in heaven that it may enjoy the bread of life until the holy (45) Resurrection." The angels took him, as we apostles watched, to the land of light.

(c) Michael then went into the midst of the souls, brought out two men and made them prostrate themselves before the Saviour. The Saviour said to Michael: "Tell my holy apostles about these two." Michael replied: "My Lord and my God, you know everything and nothing is impossible in your presence." The Saviour said: "I know everything, but I am telling you, my holy steward, to speak." Michael said: "These two men, one a pure pagan and the other a Christian worker. The

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72 Gk συνάγειν

73 Text uses pronouns only. F is slightly different

74 F breaks off at this point.

75 ἀγαπή.

Christian works for two days and receives seven eulogies<sup>76</sup> and gives them as alms to the poor and the orphans and the widows, saying; 'I have given alms in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and Michael the archangel. He did this for twenty years and reached the day when he was to die without having acquired wealth. The Saviour<sup>77</sup> raised him though he was sick, saying: "Today is Michael's (46) day. I will take my linen cloth and go to the one who sells bread in the market and pledge it and I will take what I need as a eulogy as is my habit do and give it to the poor and orphans. If God and the archangel Michael have mercy on me and cure me of my illness. I will work and earn the money to redeem my linen cloth as it was before."<sup>78</sup> If I die, let the will of the Lord be done. God and the archangel Michael can give it<sup>79</sup> to me in the other place, in the aeon to come." He got up and went to the man selling bread and pawned his property. He took the bread and gave it as charity to the poor. He then lay down for three days ill and died before redeeming his pledge from the bread-seller. The pagan passed by the worker who had died, because his storehouse was next to his house. He knew the man who had died, the man they were weeping for, because he was the one who had given him bread. The pagan also wept for him when he saw how miserable his condition was. He then went and redeemed the cloth and threw it on his face. He said: 'I greet you, man (47) in whom is the spirit of God.' When this other man came forth from the body, your mercy touched him and you granted him the bread of life that both might eat of it and live forever." The Saviour called the twelve angels and said to them: "Angels who obey their Lord, take these two souls to the tree of life that they may eat of it until the day of judgement. Take the pagan to the **Acherusian Lake** and baptize him in the name of the Trinity and leave them together, for they have found grace in each other." The angels then raised both and took them to the heaven of light. They took the pagan to the Acherusian Lake and baptized him and led him to the Church of the First-Born in heaven. They gave him the Eucharist and brought both to the tree of life. They ate together for they found mercy and love in each other.

(d) Michael then brought another soul and presented it to the Saviour, and it worshipped him. The Saviour (48) said to Michael: "My holy steward, tell my holy apostles the good things of this soul." Michael replied: "My Lord, you are the one who knows everything." The Saviour said: "My overseer and the one of my good Father, it is I who tell you to speak." Michael said: "My Lord, this man has never slandered anyone or lied from the day of his birth. If he sees people slandering, he avoids them." The Saviour then called that soul and gave it to a mighty angel: "Take this soul and give it to Enoch the scribe of justice that it may sing sacred hymns, for a soul that does not slander

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76 εὐλογία. Some sort of gift or payment cf. Lampe *Lexicon* p.570 E4.

77 Coptic: 'He'

78 I take this to mean 'in the condition in which I pledged it'.

79 Probably the money to redeem the cloth

or make false oaths or lie is what pleases my Father. The mighty angel bore it aloft, as we looked it, and carried it off to heaven.

(e) Another time, Michael brought another soul, accompanied by seven angels that had gold censers full of fragrance in their hands, and the incense wafted before the radiantly happy face. The Saviour said: "What is this soul?" Michael replied: "My Lord, you know all things, and (49) there are no things hidden from you, for they are small in your sight." The Lord said: "Yes, I know everything, but I am telling you to speak, my holy servant and steward of my Father." The archangel replied: "This man, my Lord, has never been angry. He is a gentle man. This soul, my Lord, would take the censer full of incense on the eves of the saints and cense from morning to evening. On the 12th Hathor, the day of my investiture, the soul censed from the evening of the 11th to sunrise of the 12th. Similarly the eves of all the saints were spent in this way by the soul while on earth. The soul said: 'I will not sleep or let my eyelids close or my temples rest until I find a dwelling in the house of God.' And so, my Lord, I have prepared for them, as you wish, in accordance with what it did on earth." The Saviour said; "For this reason the soul has found mercy. Take it and place it under the altar of my Father, censuring with my holy angels until (50) the completion of 1000 years that it will spend with all my saints."

(f) Then Michael brought another soul, which worshipped the Saviour and the apostles. Michael said: "This one has never cursed. It spent its whole time lighting candles in church and offering incense on feast days. So this angel has been appointed for him, with a candle in his hand, to provide light for him, while this censer provides incense for him." The Saviour said to him: "Bring this soul to the aeons of light and place it in the midst of the holy powers, blessing with them the glory of my Godhead that he may take his place with the True Bridegroom at the true feast of 1000 years."

(g) Michael brought another soul that worshipped amid the hymns of a multitude of angels. The Saviour asked who it was. Michael replied that the Saviour was omniscient and he should have mercy on the soul.<sup>80</sup> The Saviour replied: "My holy (51) steward, Michael, I do know everything but I am telling you to speak so that my disciples may know the glory that I have given to you and all who do my will." Michael said; "This one repeats the hymns and the alleluias said on the altar when your body and blood are being praised. For this reason this soul is worthy of the great glory when they sing hymns to it in great glory in the aeons of light." The Saviour ordered the soul to be taken to the aeons of light and there to be a celebration with all the saints.

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<sup>80</sup> I have modified the language slightly.

(h) Michael then brought another soul, which worshipped the Saviour, who said: "Who is this ?" Michael replied: "You know everything and you know it before it happens." The Saviour replied: "Yes, I know everything, but I am ordering you to tell me, my servant and the steward of the kingdom of my (52) good Father." Michael said: "My Lord, this one has always rejected the things of this empty world and all the things of this transient life. He has spent all his wealth on books for the church and all the monasteries<sup>81</sup> where they are read over your divine body and true blood. He says 'I offer them in the name of Jesus Christ and Michael, his mighty archangel.'" The Saviour replied: "As the soul loved the words of my Father, it brought the books to the place of life of every individual, the church. The soul will be brought to the shrine of life and readings will be made from the Book of Life of Enoch the scribe of justice. It will remain in the midst of all the virgins until the Day of the Thousand Years. Michael brought the soul and gave it to the virgins in the garden of life.

(i) He then brought another soul to the Saviour, who told Michael to tell all his apostles. Michael said: "You know everything. (53) There is nothing you cannot do." The Saviour replied: "Yes, I know everything, but I am telling you to speak so that my disciples will see the glory that I have given to my saints." Michael said: "My Lord, this man spent forty years in the desert without seeing anyone and without ceasing to pray to you and your good Father and the Holy Spirit day and night that you may receive him to you, calling on me to call on you, Lord, that he may receive your mercy. He continued to pray on the day when you invested me, the 12th Hathor. So, when he died, I called on you, my Lord, together with your good Father. You assigned an angel to me and I assigned the angel to minister to his soul." The Saviour said: "I order you to take this soul to paradise that it may be in the heavenly Jerusalem, the dwelling place of the angels, and the Cherubim (54) crown him."

(j) Michael then brought another soul that worshipped the Saviour, who asked: "What has this soul done ?" Michael replied: "He was devoted to fasting his whole life and was a magnanimous donor of the *agapê*, generously supplying fruits and offerings, caring for the holy sacrifice of your divine body and revered blood and saying that he did so in the name of Jesus Christ and Michael the archangel." The Saviour said to Michael: "Steward of my Father and intermediary of the New Testament, take this soul and give it to the three holy children, Ananias, Azarias and Misael, who conquered the flames of Nebuchadnezzar the king: they gave their bodies and souls for my holy name, so I sent you to save them and to put out the fire beneath them. Take<sup>82</sup> this one also to the

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81 Whether this means monasteries or shrines that had churches (such as Abu Mena, near Alexandria), they must be places where the Eucharist is celebrated.

82 Coptic: 'so that this one too will be taken to . . .'

heavenly light with them that he may eat of the bread of life, of which I too will eat with my disciples in the land of the living." (55)

The Saviour then said to us: "My holy apostles, your heart has remained steadfast and you understand that what each one does in my name, I will reward the deed <sup>83</sup>many times over in my kingdom. For, as I have said to you: 'Blessed are your eyes for they see. Blessed are your ears for they hear. These too are the mysteries of which I told you that it is given to you to know the mysteries of heaven.'"

We apostles, we said to him: "Our Lord and God, who are merciful to all souls, we have nothing to say in view of what we have seen today. If we go all over world and preach your name, we will order our people: 'When the 12th Hathor comes around, do not lie down or sleep, but let your loins be girded and your lamps burning that they will be worthy of this great joy that has happened on this day.'"

**18.** The Saviour then said to the apostles: "Arise and let us go the garden of heaven and I will (56) point out to you the places of judgement which are on the level of the garden to the west and the land of rest, to which those who have paid for their sins and inherited life are taken." The souls came and cried out: "Jesus, king of glory, remember us." Michael signalled to the apostles to prostrate themselves and worship and pray. The apostles prostrated themselves at that moment with Michael and all the angels. They cried aloud; "Lord, have mercy on us, merciful one, Jesus our king." The Saviour raised the apostles and Michael and said to the souls: "About the apostles and Michael, because they have seen you, I will grant you three days relief at this time of the year, on the 12th Hathor, all punishments suspended. The good things that Michael has brought from heaven, at the request of Michael and my brother apostles, you will eat from them today." All the souls in unison said: "Amen". They ate of all the good things that Michael had brought from heaven that day. They rejoiced and blessed (57) the eternal Trinity. Amen. The Saviour then called the apostles and said to them: "Do you firmly believe in the glory of my beloved Michael?" They said: "Yes, Lord. You have concealed nothing from us and filled us with joy."

**19.** The Saviour said to them; "Come, let us go to the Father that he may bless you and you may evangelize the whole world." We went to the place of Michael and our Saviour, At the first gate the angels worshipped him. He brought us to all the gates and all the angels worshipped him, blessing

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83 Coptic: ' I will grant them to them many times . . . !

him. He brought us to the Father, who blessed us.<sup>84</sup> We heard the voice of the Father,<sup>85</sup> saying: "Be strong. My strength is with you, my co-heirs. Go and fulfil my wish. Come to me and sit on your thrones. I will set before you the bread of life and you will eat of it." We received the blessing of the perfect and eternal Trinity. Amen.

**20.** After this we came to the Mount of Olives, our bodies **(58)** shining like the sun. Jesus blessed us saying: "Blessed are you, for the Father has blessed you. Your bodies will rejoice. Your bones will put forth shoots. Your faces will be blessed. Your flesh will diffuse the fragrance of the tree of life, for the angels will come upon earth and speak with you and accompany you in all the lands to which you go. Everywhere you go and ask for me or my Father, I will send my angels and they will bless you. Amen, I say to you that the angels and all the powers of heaven will admire you and say: 'See the glory that has been given to men of the flesh.'"

Now then, my disciples, go forth into the world and preach the four gospels and the sweet teaching that I told you when I was teaching. There is no country to which you will not go and preach<sup>86</sup> my name and that of my Father in it. Everywhere will listen and bless you. The clouds will hear you like servants. The hills will speak to you. **(59)** If you leave out another country or city or town, I will ask you on the day of the true judgement, because everywhere you leave your footprints will be purified. The paths on which you walk will embolden you and they will go<sup>87</sup> before you like an even path. Everything you eat, pray over it first, because everything is purified by prayer. Everything you embark on, pray first before you do it and preach the gospel to all creation. The one who believes and receives baptism will not slighted. These signs will be revealed to those who believe. They will cast out demons in my name. They will speak other languages. They will seize serpents in their hands. Even if they drink poison, it will do them no harm. They will place their hands on the sick, who will be healed."

As he was saying all of this to the apostles, Peter stirred the disciples asleep on the olive tree. They arose and told them everything they had seen: "When our Father **(60)** blessed you in heaven, we too were replying 'Amen' in the aeons of light." Peter said: "And where were you while we were in heaven and Our Lord took us away and told us everything?" Peter's disciple said: "We were taken up on an olive tree by angels and our souls brought forth from our bodies. We were taken to the river of milk and shown the children that Herod had slaughtered because of the name of Christ. Our souls

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84 Lit. 'He brought us to the Father, he blessed us.'

85 Lit. 'The voice of the Father was to us.'

86 Lit. 'You will not leave out any country, without having gone there to preach . . .'

87 As it stand 'paths' is the subject of 'go'. Perhaps emend from **ΠΟΡΕΥΕ** (go) to **ΨΑΠΤΕ** (become) ?



were brought and restored to your bodies as before. Amen."

When the apostles heard this, they rejoiced greatly and glorified the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, to whom belong glory, honour and power before all aeons forever and ever. Amen.

**21.** The book of the Investiture of the holy Archangel Michael has come to an end. His holy blessings be with us. Amen.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> This is identical to section (A) of the colophon, except for the name.