

The Investiture of the Archangel Gabriel

translated and annotated
by
Lance Jenott

Introduction

This translation is based on the edition published by C. Detlef G. Müller in 1962.¹ The single manuscript witness to the text, Pierpont Morgan Codex M593 (folios 31r–50r = pages 61–100), was copied in the year 892/893 by one John the Psalmist and dedicated to the Monastery of the Archangel Michael, according to the scribe’s colophon. Preceding this treatise in the codex is another book similarly entitled ‘The Book of the Investiture of the Holy Archangel Michael’ (pages 1-60), which is partially extant in other manuscripts. The codex was discovered in 1910 at the ruins of the Monastery of the Archangel Michael, near the town of Hamouli in the Fayum, and in the following year was purchased by J. P. Morgan, in whose library it is kept today.²

I have omitted Müller’s section numbers and instead inserted the page numbers from the codex in parentheses. Paragraph divisions and descriptive subheadings, set in italics, are my own contrivance.

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¹ C. Detlef G. Müller, *Die Bücher der Einsetzung der Erzengel Michael und Gabriel*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 225, Scriptorum Coptici 31 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1962), 61–82. Müller’s annotated German translation is found in the companion volume, *Die Bücher der Einsetzung der Erzengel Michael und Gabriel*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 226, Scriptorum Coptici 32 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1962), 74–100.

² Henri Hyvernat, *A Check List of Coptic Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library* (New York: privately printed, 1919), xiii.

Prologue

(61) This is the book of the holy archangel Gabriel's investiture,³ the messenger of life, whom the Father appointed over all the holy ones, to serve them and comfort them in all their afflictions, so they may rejoice and be victorious in the good fight and receive the crown of life that remains forever in the heavens – just as Stephen the archdeacon⁴ received it⁵ from the holy apostles. In the peace of God. Amen.

The Apostles Inquire of the Savior

Now it happened that when the apostles gathered with our Savior, the king of life and peace, to ask about the division of everything by him – about the arrangement of the aeons of light, and all the animals God created, and the number of the angels, both those of the day and those of the night – he revealed to them the entire mystery of his divinity, because he chose the twelve disciples for himself from the seventy-two regions⁶ and called them 'My companions and brothers.'

When they gathered around the Savior, he said to them, "My holy apostles, I will not hide anything from you; but everything you want to ask me about (will be revealed): (62) the arrangement of the aeons, the establishment of the churches throughout the whole inhabited world, the manner of my holy resurrection, the faith of salvation, and all the nations of the earth, because many were worshipping idols. So then ask, and I will show you everything, because you are the overseers of the seventy-two regions. And when one of my sheep is lost – these for whom I gave my body and blood – I will search for it through you, because you are the heralds of my death and holy resurrection."

When the apostles heard this from the son of God, they rejoiced greatly, and responded unanimously, "Blessed are we, because God has appeared to us and spoken with us face to face,⁷ and persuaded us in our hearts over what we asked of him." They knelt down and worshipped the Savior saying, "You are Jesus, king of all the aeons. You are Jesus, our life; Jesus, our Savior; Jesus, our redeemer. You are Jesus, the salvation of the whole world. You are Jesus, the bread of life; and those who eat of you (63) will never be hungry. You are Jesus, the fragrance of all the aeons. You are Jesus, the comfort of the martyrs, those who were afflicted on behalf

³ Lit. "establishment," i.e., his appointment to the rank of archangel.

⁴ Acts 6–7

⁵ I.e., the book

⁶ Luke 10:1, 17: the seventy-two apostles (or 'seventy' according to some mss.) commissioned by Jesus. The textual variant 'seventy-two' prevailed in the Eastern Church, and was adopted by Jerome in the Vulgate.

⁷ Lit. "mouth to mouth"

of your holy name. You are Jesus, he who was a security to Adam until the Father gave him the Holy Spirit. You are Jesus, the crown of those who fight well in the good fight. You are Jesus, the tree of life planted in Paradise – he who will eat from it will never die. You are Jesus, boundless in glory and blessing and life. So then, our Lord, we entreat you to tell us about what we ask.”

The Savior responded to them, “My brothers and holy apostles, ask me about anything you want, and I will show you everything.”

Thomas responded, “My Lord, there’s a little question in my heart that I want to ask you about, Jesus, the true light that shines on every soul.”

The Savior responded, saying, “Ask, my elect Thomas.”

Thomas responded, “My Lord and my God, we want you to tell us how many angels rule over the day and how many over the night. (64) And tell us about the apportionment of each one among them so we may proclaim their honor throughout the whole world, just as you have revealed to us the glory and investiture of the holy archangel Gabriel,⁸ the guardian of life. Since you have persuaded us in our hearts that you are he whom the Father set at his right hand, being superior to all humanity, forgive them, Lord, namely your handiwork, your likeness and image. Now again, my Lord, in supplicatory language and humility of soul, we entreat you to tell us about the investiture of the archangel Gabriel, the messenger, because we have heard you speak about his honor and glory many times.”

The Savior responded, saying, “My elect Thomas, every time you ask me a question, my spirit rejoices and the face of my Father is delighted. So ask anything you want, and nothing in the entire creation that my Father created shall be hidden from you and your brothers, the apostles.” Then the Savior got up and stood there. He said to the apostles, “Get up, pray together to my living Father, and he will grant you what you are seeking.” (65) Then the Savior extended his hands and prayed to his Father in this way: “My Father, the father of my soul, listen to your beloved son who calls out to you. I bless you, my good Father, who loves his son. Listen to your son who calls out to you, and send me all the angels in the aeons of light, those of the day and those of the night, so that my elect apostles may see the glory and honor of Gabriel, the messenger of the aeons of light, and so they may proclaim him throughout the entire world.”

The Twelve Angels of the Day

Just as the Savior said this, immediately the heavens opened, one after the next, and all the angels were coming to the feet of the Savior, worshiping him according to

⁸ ‘Gabriel’ may be a mistake for ‘Michael’ here, since Jesus has not yet taught them about the former. A book entitled ‘The Investiture of the Holy Archangel Michael’ precedes this text in the codex.

their ranks. All of them were calling out, saying, “Greetings, our Lord, greetings, our king, we worship you, the god who sprouted from the heart of the good Father. You are Jesus, the staff of righteousness in the dwelling place of the humble. You are Jesus, the bushel of grapes in the hand of the Father. You are Jesus, the heavenly bread. You are Jesus, the water in which all are baptized for the forgiveness of their sins. You are Jesus, the name sweet in the mouths of all the holy ones. Glory to you and (66) your good Father and the Holy Spirit forever and ever! Amen.” When the angels finished singing this hymn they said to the Savior, “Lord, behold, we have come at your command.”

The Savior responded and said to the twelve angels – those appointed over the twelve hours of the day – “Reveal your names among my brothers and elect apostles so their hearts may be at ease over what they ask. For they are the ones I chose out of the whole world, and I called them my brothers, my esteemed apostles. I revealed to them all my mysteries, so they may go out into every region of the world and proclaim my name among all the nations and turn them away from their sins and impieties and arrogance and thievery and jealousies and hatred and sexual immorality and adulteries and filthy speech in God’s house – the place where I have set my body and blood – along with those who speak frivolously with their mouths. For on the true day of judgement they shall render an account of all these matters.”

Just then, behold, twelve esteemed angels girded (67) with golden belts over their loins, standing in appointed order. The Savior commanded them to greet each of the apostles, and when they came up to Thomas, they said to him, “Get up, Thomas, and we will teach you what you want to know.”

The first said, “I am the Anatolê⁹ of the Father. I dwell over the aeons so that they do not change. May the blessings of my Lord be with you. Amen.”

The second angel said, “I am Souriêl, he who holds the light of glory in his hands. I dwell over the second hour of the day. May the blessings of my Lord be with you. Amen.”

The third angel said, “I am Aramatha, the souls of the righteous are in my hands. I dwell over the third hour of the day. May the blessings of my Lord be with you. Amen.”

The fourth angel said, “I am Arithaêl, he who is set over the fourth hour of the day. I am the rising of all the holy ones, and all the powers are subordinate because of me. May the blessings of my Lord be with you. Amen.”

The fifth angel said, “I (68) am Eiezeos. I dwell over the fifth hour of the day. It is I who strengthen the angels in their positions until the fair dew falls upon the Earth. May the blessings of my Lord be with you. Amen.”

⁹ ‘The Rising’ or ‘the East.’

The sixth angel said, “I am Othrithea. I dwell over the sixth hour of the day. I am the light for the righteous ones on the path by which <they>¹⁰ will go to God. May the blessings of my Lord be with you. Amen.”

The seventh angel said, “I am Thersem. I dwell over the seventh hour of the day. I am he who makes the righteous appear in wisdom and purity while still in the world. May the blessings of my Lord be with you. Amen.”

The eighth angel said, “I am Alpha. I am set over the eighth hour of the day. I am he who holds the words of the angels in his hands. May the blessings of my Lord be with you. Amen.”

The ninth angel said, “I am Thriêl. I dwell over the ninth hour of the day. I am set over the speech of every soul, both good and evil, and I seal every word people will utter. May the blessings of my (69) Lord be with you. Amen.”

The tenth angel said, “I am Nabouthai. I am set over the tenth hour of the day. I am he who is set over the knowledge of all the living. May the blessings of my Lord be with you. Amen.”

The eleventh angel said, “I am Kadiêl. I dwell over the eleventh hour of the day. I am he who is with the martyrs, watching over them until they give their souls into the hands of God. May the blessings of my Lord be with you. Amen.”

The twelfth angel said, “I am Sanabouthouêl. I am over the twelfth hour of the day. I am he who is set over the robes of the righteous, covering them with every beauty of the Holy Spirit. May the blessings of my Lord be with you. Amen.”

After this, the Savior said to the apostles, “Are your hearts satisfied over what you asked?” And they said to him, “Yes, our Lord.”

The Angelic Myriads

Thomas responded, “My Lord, don’t be angry at me if I speak again.”

He said to him, “Speak, my beloved Thomas.”

So Thomas responded, “My Lord and my God, (70) are these really the only holy angels whose honor you told us about?”

The Savior said to him, “Be patient, my elect Thomas. Indeed, nothing will be hidden from you – you, your brothers, and every creation that my Father created.” Then the Savior lifted up his eyes to heaven, saying, “My good Father, may you send me today all the ranks of heavenly angels, those who are over the aeons of light, so my disciples may see them.” And after he said this for us, we the apostles saw with our own eyes the heavens opening one after another, and behold, an angelic multitude appeared on the mountain with us. Then they worshipped the Savior, saying, “Behold, Lord, we have come to you by the consent of your good Father.” The Savior

¹⁰ Ms. ‘by which I will go to God.’

said to them, “Reveal your names and ranks to my brothers, the apostles – how many thousands there are in your armies.”

Straightaway a magnificent angel advanced to the front and worshipped the Savior. The Savior said to him, “Reveal your name to my disciples so they may hear about your honor.” The angel responded, “I am Gabriel, the messenger of the aeons of (71) light, whom the Father has appointed over twenty-four myriads of angels.” The Savior said to him, “Now hold back a little, my mighty angel, until all the ranks have revealed their names. Then I will speak with you about their honor.”

After this, behold, another great and mighty angel, whose whole body was covered with eyes, advanced and worshipped the Savior. The Savior said to him, “Reveal your name to my disciples so they may hear about your honor.” He responded, “I am Lelêth. I have a thousand eyes and I am over twenty-eight myriads of angels. We are ready to carry out your command.” Then the Savior commanded him and those of his cohort, and they withdrew to their place in peace.

After this, behold, another mighty angel advanced and worshipped the Savior. The Savior said to him, “Reveal your name to my disciples so they may hear about your honor.” The angel responded, “I am Nazôrath. I dwell over the seven springs of living water, and all the water is sweet because of me. My whole cohort of angels makes twenty-four myriads.” And the Savior commanded him and those of his cohort, and they went up into the heavens (72) in glory.

After this, behold, another great and mighty angel worshipped the Savior. The Savior said to him, “Reveal your name in the midst of my apostles so they may hear about your honor.” The angel responded, “I am Hormosiêl, the trumpeter of the aeons of light. I sound the trumpet before the righteous as they go into the city of the Blessed One and inherit its goodness.” Then the Savior commanded him and those of his cohort, numbering twenty-one myriads, and they went to their places in peace.

After this, behold, another great, mighty and gentle angel came and worshipped the Savior. The Savior said to him, “Reveal your name in the midst of my disciples so they may hear about your honor.” He responded, “I am Ouriêl. I make heavy hearts turn to being open-minded and abandon their hostilities and come into the house of God.” After he said this, the Savior commanded him and his whole cohort, numbering twenty thousand, and they went to their places in peace.

The Angel of Judgement Day

After this, behold, another great and glorious angel came and worshipped the Savior. But when we the apostles saw him we were terrified, because we had not seen (73) anyone among all the angels who looked like him. The Savior said to him, “Reveal your name and the angels who follow you so my disciples may hear about your honor.” The angel replied, saying, “My Lord, do you want me to reveal everything I

dwelt over?” The Savior said to him, “Speak and explain everything that my Father is going to command you.”

So the angel spoke: “I am he who holds the place of judgement in his hands. When the whole world is obliterated in the blink of an eye, and no soul remains on it, then the Father will set his throne in the Valley of Jôsaphat¹¹ on the day of the great and true judgement. I am the one the Father will command to fetch the bodies of the holy ones – those who will rot away in the earth, and those whom fire consumed, and those who went into the waters of the sea, and those who have gone through the point of a sword. I am he who will raise them all according to the Lord’s command on that day, so that they come to the Valley of Jôsaphat and the true judge may judge them according to their deeds. The deeds of each of them shall be revealed, the sinner and the (74) impious one, and the righteous one with his righteousness. For the Lord is merciful, and many are his mercies for his image. There is no favoritism before him; rather, he judges with righteousness. He who shall give charity¹² to a poor man here, (the Lord) gives him great honors in his kingdom, because he fulfilled his commandments. For he who gives charity to a poor man gives for the interest¹³ of God.”

Thomas responded and said to the angel, “How will they be gathered since they are all mixed up with each other – the Greeks with the barbarians, the Jews with the barbarians, and the faithful Christians with the faithless. For race differs from race.”

The angel responded and said to Thomas, “To the extent the Lord has commanded me, I will reveal to you each thing. Indeed, when all flesh rises, from the time of Adam the first formation up to Afdeleël the last born on earth, all will come to the Valley of Jôsaphat, and the deeds of each one will be gathered before God’s judgement seat. As for he who has done what is good, you will find all his good deeds gathered before the judgement seat of Christ. And as for every sin a person committed, you will find them sealed with his soul in that very hour. Even right down to the smallest, itchy-bitsy words (75) one speaks, he will have to answer for them on that day of true judgement, and he will not be able to lie. Indeed, on that day no father will be able to help his child, nor will child be able to help father; but each one will hardly be able to bear his own burden, whether good or evil.

So then, as for the one who will be discovered to have given charity to a poor man, a widow, and an orphan, or who took-in a stranger, or who went early into the house of God, he will accordingly be filled with eternal goodness. And as for the one to whom mercy is not given on that day, his share of life will not be before the judge,

¹¹ Joel 3:2–12.

¹² Or “show mercy”

¹³ I.e., monetary interest. According to the economic metaphor, charity in this world earns interest in the kingdom God.

nor will there be forgiveness for him. Rather, he will be just as David said, ‘The impious shall become like dust scattered by the wind over the face of the whole earth,’¹⁴ because he neglected his own salvation and did not give charity so that charity might be given to him.

Furthermore, you asked, ‘How will they be gathered, since they are all mixed up with each other?’ Listen to me and I will explain everything to you. For God will command an altar to appear in the Valley of Jôsapath. The Son of God will stand at the right hand of his good Father and will turn into the form of a lamb (76) and will be upon the altar. Peter, the great apostle and great high priest, he to whom the Father gave the keys to the kingdom of heaven, he will stand and offer sacrifice. At that very moment the lamb will change; he will become a divine body and true blood. And Peter, the great high priest, shall call out in the first Eucharist, saying, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord Sabaôth, heaven and earth are full of your holy glory.’¹⁵

Everyone who responds to that call and listens to this mystery will rush to it and listen to the second Eucharist, ‘The holies of the holy.’ And everyone who listens to this call and says, ‘Behold holy Father, behold holy Son, in the Holy Spirit, Amen,’ they will come forward unanimously and receive from the body and blood of Christ Jesus, the son of the living God, he whom the Virgin Mary begat, the true lamb. At that very moment the voice of the Son of God meets them: ‘Come to my right hand, blessed ones of my Father, and you will inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’

But as for everyone who does not respond to the call to Eucharist (77) at that very moment, their mouths will be closed, and they will be ashamed along with their father the Devil. A terrifying voice meets them: ‘Withdraw from me, those who are accursed, into the eternal fire.’

Straightaway the entire angelic host of angels responds righteously with one voice, ‘You are righteous, Lord, and your judgement is righteous. There is no favoritism before you.’ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father, as it is written.¹⁶ But as for the impious, they will be tied up in bundles for the fires and thrown into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

So then, this is the sketch of what will occur in the Valley of Jôsapath on the day of true judgement. Indeed the body and blood of the Son of God will separate each race, each language, and each nation. Blessed is he who will understand the sound of the call to Eucharist on that day, for he will have communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

¹⁴ Psalm 1:4 LXX

¹⁵ The doxology is spoken in Greek, not Coptic.

¹⁶ Matt 13:43

Now after the angel had said these things, he went on to speak some other great mysteries. Then the Savior commanded him and his cohort, and they went to their place in peace.

Five More Angels

After this, again, behold, even more angelic multitudes (78) emerged from their appointed ranks and knelt before the Savior. He said to them, “Reveal your names so my disciples may hear about your honor.”

The first angel said, “I am Ouriêl, he who holds all the powers of God in his hands. May the blessings of my Lord be with you. Amen.”

The second angel said, “I am Sourathiêl, messenger to the prophets. May the blessings of my Lord be with you. Amen.”

The third angel said, “I am Daveithaêl, he who dwells in the church of the first-born children. May the blessings of my Lord be with you. Amen.”

The fourth angel said, “I am Yeremiêl. As for all those who struggle in this world – whether in prayer or in righteousness or in love or in charity or in endurance or in offerings – the Father commands me to pay them their wages according to their deeds. I pay them sevenfold, in fact, because God rejoices over a sinner who repents from his wicked path and lives. He forgives him for everything he did.” Then the Savior commanded him to (79) go to his place in peace.

The fifth angel responded, “I am Litharkouêl, he who holds the unguent box filled with medicine of life. I heal every soul.¹⁷ May the blessings of my Lord be with you. Amen.”

Then the cherubim and seraphim came forth with all the angelic armies, and they worshiped the Savior and the apostles. Just then the Savior heard a voice saying, “My beloved son, this point is the end of the discourse on the names of the angels. Do not reveal what is hidden under the sun. For the whole world will not be able to bear a single letter of their names. Instead, teach your brother apostles about the investiture of the great archangel Gabriel, just as they have asked you.” So the Savior commanded the cherubim and seraphim and all the ranks of heaven, and they went to their places in peace, calling out, “Glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.”

¹⁷ The angel Litharkouêl bears a striking resemblance to the cryptic figure of Lithargoêl in the *Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles* (NHC VI,1), who turns out to be Jesus in disguise. Both hold an unguent box of medicine and are concerned with the healing of souls (NHC VI 8.14–19, 9.30, 10.31–11.25).

Gabriel's First Speech: His Glorious Resumé

Then the Savior turned to Gabriel and said to him, “Behold, all the angels have revealed their names among my disciples, along with the powers and all the ranks of (80) heaven. Now then, as for you, teach my disciples about your power and glory, since you are the one who helps a multitude by bringing the good news from the face of the Father.”

Gabriel responded, “My Lord, mercy belongs to you and your good Father. As for us, we are your servants, ready in fear and trembling to do as you command. Now then, my Lord, I am the one the Father sent with Michael to Adam, the first human, in the waters of the Jordan.¹⁸ We preached to him the good news of repentance, saying, ‘The Lord God forgives you of your sins.’ It was I too who delivered the good news to Abraham, saying, ‘God has granted you a son in your old age, and his seed is exceedingly numerous. For nothing is impossible with God.’¹⁹ And I am also the one who went to Zacharias the priest when he was standing on the right of the altar of incense. I said to him, ‘Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayers have been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John. There will be joy and gladness for you, and many will rejoice over his birth. For he will become great in the eyes of God and will be filled with (81) the Holy Spirit, because he is the forerunner²⁰ of the Lord, the king of kings, and he is the baptizer of the aeons of light.’²¹

I too am the one the Father sent to the virgin named Mary, whose husband’s name is Joseph. And when I went to her, I said to her, ‘Greetings, she who has found favor. The Lord is with you. Behold, you will conceive a son and name him Jesus. He will become great and will be called son of the Exalted One. The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and there will be no end to his kingdom.’²² So then, open your mouth and swallow this cloud of light which has hidden within it what belongs to heaven and earth.’²³

¹⁸ In the Latin Life of Adam and Eve, Adam performs penance in the Jordan river for forty days (vi-xvii). The Slavonic version mentions attending angels (xxxvii).

¹⁹ Cf. Gen 18, where God appears to Abraham as three men at the oaks of Mamre. The targumim specify that Abraham was visited by three angels.

²⁰ מִיְטָטוֹר, from Latin *metator*, ‘one who marks off boundaries,’ and *metor*, ‘to measure, mark off.’ By extension, the word came to mean ‘one sent in advance’ – e.g., of troops, to mark off the boundaries of a camp. Compare Rabbinic Hebrew usage in מִיְטָטוֹר, ‘one sent in advance’ (Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim*, 772).

²¹ Cf. Luke 1:1–19

²² Luke 1:26–33

²³ A sudden departure from Luke’s narrative. Al-Ṭabarī (9th c. CE), interpreting Quran surah 19, records a tradition that Maryam conceived when the spirit of God entered her through the mouth. Another, more commonly held view among Muslim exegetes is that Maryam conceived by the angel

But the holy virgin said, ‘I can’t bear it,²⁴ for I see it’s in magnificent glory.’ I said to her, ‘You will not bear it; but it will bear you – and not you alone, but the entire world. Indeed, he who shall be born is the root of wisdom; he is the fount of the waters of life; he is the good news for all the holy ones; he is the treasure filled with every goodness; he is the altar of life; (82) he is the joy and inheritance of all the holy ones; he is the mystery of life; he is the seal of knowledge; he is the full fullness; he is the place of every soul’s ferry-crossing; he is the completion of the universe, and he fills the universe; he is the first-born of all creation;²⁵ he is the hidden name that will be proclaimed throughout the entire world;²⁶ he is the life that shall be given for a multitude of souls; it is he who created the world, and nothing exists without him.²⁷ Glory be to him and his good Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.’ Now when I said this to Mary she marveled, and straightaway the glory of the Lord dwelt in her.”

Then the Savior said to the apostles, “My esteemed fellow-limbs, are your hearts satisfied over my esteemed messenger Gabriel, the holy archangel?”

They said, “Yes, our Lord. You have persuaded us on every point.”

Gabriel’s Second Speech: An Exhortation to Charity

The Savior turned again to Gabriel and said to him, “My esteemed messenger, reveal your powers and the rest of your wonders so my elect apostles may see and proclaim them throughout the entire world, and so all who hear of them may keep them and be saved from the judge.”

Gabriel answered, (83) “My Lord, it is you who knows all things from the beginning, before they happen. But insofar as you have commanded me, I will say what you have put in my mouth, you and your good Father. For, my Lord, I am he who goes to the martyrs and comforts them in all their afflictions, saying to them, ‘Endure! Fight well! No crown is permanent; yet you will receive the crown of life.’ I too am he who receives their souls, and I sing with them²⁸ and all the ranks of the

Djibril’s (Gabriel) blowing into her shirt. See Jane I. Smith and Yvonne Y. Haddad, “The Virgin Mary in Islamic Tradition and Commentary,” *The Muslim World* 79.3–4 (1989): 161–87, esp. 167. I thank Professor Shaun Marmon of Princeton University for the reference.

²⁴ I.e. the cloud (indicated in Coptic by the feminine pronoun)

²⁵ Col 1:15

²⁶ Cf. Rev 19:12

²⁷ John 1:3, Col 1:16, Heb 1:2

²⁸ The precise meaning of $\psi\alpha\lambda\lambda\epsilon\dot{\iota}\ \bar{\eta}\zeta\eta\tau\omicron\gamma$ is unclear since one expects a direct object with the verb $\psi\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omega$. Given the Coptic preposition $\zeta\bar{\eta}$ here, the meaning ‘sing with musical accompaniment’ seems appropriate (Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1539). The idea that souls sing with the angels in heavenly liturgy was common among Jews and Christians.

angels up into the tabernacle of the Father. They worship him in joy and happiness, and the Father rejoices with them, and the Son blesses them, and the Holy Spirit comforts them, and they rest in the city of joy forever. I too, my Lord, am he who went to Sibla the virgin, the sister of Enoch the scribe of righteousness.²⁹ I embraced her and rescued her from the hand of the dirty Devil when he wanted to do dirty things to her.

Now then, Peter, the great apostle, listen to me – I Gabriel – so I may speak with you, you and your brother apostles. When you go out into the world to preach to the nations about everything you have witnessed, say to them: So said Gabriel the archangel, the messenger of life: (84) Fight well, people. Be charitable to the poor so that God may be charitable to you too on the day of your agony³⁰ and save you from the powers of darkness that pursue the souls of the impious. Therefore fight for yourselves, as long as you are in the world, before the agony of death catches up to you, and you regret it and say, ‘Why didn’t we help ourselves (while we were still) on earth?’

He who shall receive a stranger in my name,³¹ or feed the hungry, or give drink to the thirsty, or clothe the naked, I shall clothe him with my glorious robe until he is received into the presence of God and worships him. I shall petition on his behalf before the true judge, and he will pay him his wages a thousand fold. And as for he who will copy the book of my investiture, I will petition God on his behalf in particular, and God will blot out the record of all his sins and write his name in the book of life. He will be worthy to include himself with the holy ones in the thousand-year feast.³²

So then, people,³³ do not neglect yourselves and go on day after day saying, ‘Tomorrow I’ll be charitable for the sake of my soul.’ For you do not know what is

²⁹ Sibla, i.e., the prophetess Sibyl, was associated with Enoch in Coptic-Christian lore. An Apa Enoch and Ama Sibyl (ⲁⲙⲁ ⲥⲓⲃⲮⲗⲗⲁ, ⲁⲙⲁ ⲥⲓⲃⲮⲗⲁ), for example, are mentioned together frequently on epitaphs and inscriptions from the Monastery of Jeremiah at Saqqara; see James E. Quibell and H. Thompson, eds., *Excavations at Saqqara*, vol. 4 (Cairo: L’institut français d’archéologie orientale, 1912), pp. 48–49, epitaphs: 51 (no. 174), 53 (no. 181), 55 (nos. 188, 190), 58 (no. 190), 59 (no. 202), 60 (no. 203), 62 (no. 204), 63 (nos. 206, 208), 64 (no. 209), 67 (no. 219), 68 (nos. 222, 224), 73 (no. 232), 74 (no. 233), 75 (no. 240), 77 (no. 247), 78 (nos. 249, 250), 84 (no. 268), 88 (no. 282), 90 (nos. 288, 290), 94 (nos. 302, 304); inscriptions: 96 (no. 312), 99 (nos. 318, 319), 103 (no. 329), 105 (no. 334). See also sources cited by J. T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments from Qumrân Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), 96–97; Stephen Gero, “Henoah und die Sibylle,” *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche* 73 (1982): 148–50 (I thank Professor Moulié Vidas of Princeton University for the reference to Gero).

³⁰ The agony of death (see the next sentence). The Greco-Coptic word ⲁⲛⲁⲗⲕⲏ, ‘agony,’ often carries the connotation of ‘necessity,’ in this case, the necessity of pain in death.

³¹ I.e., Gabriel’s name.

³² Cf. Rev 20:4

³³ Gabriel is still delivering to Peter what he is to preach to the people of the world.

going to befall you tomorrow. Instead, if a poor man asks of you, give to him gladly so that God will give (85) you their repayment a thousand fold in heaven. Be first into God's church to give your offerings and first fruits for the redemption of souls. For he who will give charity to the needy, or clothe the naked, or visit the sick, or receive a stranger, or visit prisoners according to the commandments of the gospel – namely, 'I was hungry and you fed me; I was thirsty and you gave me a drink; I was naked and you clothed me; I was a stranger and you received me in; I was sick and you visited me; I was imprisoned and you visited me'³⁴ – he shall in this way inherit the eternal goodness.

Surely God is not a stranger, or naked, or hungry, or thirsty, is he? Certainly not. Rather, he says, 'The (acts of) charity and love that you do for the needy among you, the widows and the orphans, you do them for me.'³⁵ But lest someone among you claims, 'It isn't true that what you do for the widow and orphan, you do for God' – Yes indeed you do it for God, if in fact – listen to me and I'll tell you – God is not to be liar. Certainly not. But listen to him speaking (86) in the holy scriptures with his beloved son: 'Let us make Man after our likeness and our image and make him lord over all creation³⁶ that we created on earth so that he may bless us along with all the angels.'³⁷ So then, sons of men, know that the image of God is the image of Man, just as he said from his holy mouth. Therefore do not doubt the words of scripture, on account of which the world is established. And do not become neglectful either, lest at the end you regret it and say, 'They³⁸ were spoken to us so many times, but we did not repent. That's why we're in these sorry straights.'

I testify to you, you who listen to these words of life from the holy scriptures, that if someone does something good in this world, I bow before God – I Gabriel, and the entire angelic host, and Michael – and we petition him until he gives that one a storehouse filled with every goodness in the kingdom of God. Because he is good, and great is his mercy for his formed image.³⁹ On the other hand, if someone falls into transgression or sin, but regrets it and repents immediately for what he has done, and petitions God saying, 'I have sinned, (87) Lord, forgive me, and I will not go back to sinning again,' and if God perceives that you have straightened out your heart toward him, that you have humbled yourself, that you have called out to him quickly, before the sun sets, he will immediately forgive you of all your sins in righteousness

³⁴ Matt 25:35–36

³⁵ Cf. Matt 25:40

³⁶ Gen 1:26

³⁷ I.e., Man and angels together bless the godhead.

³⁸ The words of scripture

³⁹ I.e., humanity. The 'formed image' (*plasma*) alludes to God's formation of humanity from earth in Gen 2:7 LXX (ἔπλασεν), combined with the idea that he created humanity after his image and likeness (Gen 1:26–27, 5:1).

and will not let them be written in the record⁴⁰ of all your sins whatsoever. Because the Lord is good, and great is his mercy. For he said, ‘On the day the impious one turns away from his sins and acts righteously, I will forgive him all his sins and count him among my holy ones.’⁴¹

Listen to me: I tell you that God has not set a heavy burden on people. Rather, it is Man who draws the heavy burden of sin upon himself through his wicked desire, until he fulfills the wicked Devil’s deeds, which you cannot even speak of. But God has spoken to the rich man according to his riches, and to the impoverished man according to his poverty: to the rich man, that he give charity to the needy; and to the impoverished, that he pray to him with his whole heart so that, in his kingdom, he may be charitable to them all.

Indeed, because of this he (Jesus) said, ‘As for he who gives a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in my name, and (in the name of) my great elect archangels, Michael and Gabriel, the messenger of life, on the day of his (88) holy investiture,⁴² even in the name of one of my disciples, his wages shall not be lost. But I shall give him a share in the kingdom of heaven and count him among all the holy ones and write his name in the book of life. He shall inherit my kingdom with all its goodness that I prepared for those who love me, those who believe in me and my holy resurrection.’

So then, brothers, you understand that the burden of Christ is light and easy to bear. Therefore fight for yourselves, each one according to his ability, whether in prayer, or fasting, or love, or virginity, or endurance, or repentance, or bodily purity on the Sabbath day and the holy day of the Lord, so that <you>⁴³ are first in God’s church to partake of the mysteries, the body and blood of God’s son. And when he (Jesus) sees that they are pure inside and out from every defilement of the Devil, then he stretches out his divine hand and gives into their hands (a share) of his esteemed body and blood to purify them from every sin. Because God is always in purity, along with his beloved son and the Holy Spirit.

I testify to you that every time (89) and in every place the priests⁴⁴ of this world raise up an offering, God’s son goes up with the twenty-four elders, and Michael and Gabriel, and the entire angelic host, the cherubim and the seraphim – they go up on the altar with the body and blood of God’s son, glorifying him. Christ stands over his body and blood until everyone finishes gathering; and after they partake of the gift for the forgiveness of sin, the entire angelic host takes the offering up into heaven until it

⁴⁰ Col 2:15

⁴¹ Cf. Ezek 18:21–23, 33:14–15

⁴² I.e., on the festival days of Michael and Gabriel respectively, which commemorate their appointment as archangels.

⁴³ Ms. “they”

⁴⁴ Or ‘elders.’

is received into the church of the first-born gathered in heaven, so that they⁴⁵ are gathered there with all the holy ones and the entire angelic host. Then the Father rejoices over this esteemed service with his beloved son and the Holy Spirit. The pattern done on earth is therefore done in heaven as well, because divinity is one, lordship is one, and community is one.

Behold, beloved brothers, you have heard about the glory and esteem of the Lord's body and blood, that they purify (90) Man from every sin so he may inherit with the holy ones. So then, brothers, prepare to be first in the meetings of the holy churches, to hear David in the Psalter, and Paul preaching in the apostolic corpus, and to hear the holy gospel. And when you have heard them, you have completed the service of the holy gospel and the offering of the body and blood of Christ. Then advance to the holy altar, come together, and Christ will reach out his divine hand and unite with <you>⁴⁶ through his holy body and esteemed blood for the forgiveness of your sins. He will rejoice with you, because you have completed so beautifully the service of his holy sacrifice.

Brothers, do not neglect all these commands I have given you – I, Gabriel the archangel – according to the Lord's command, lest at the end you regret it (and say), 'We didn't do what's right, so that God would take pity and show us mercy on the (91) day of our agony.' For he who is charitable to a poor man and a pauper, according to the needs of this world, at the very moment he comes to the agony of death, God hears him immediately. He finds mercy within himself for his formed image, he becomes his protector and salvation, and rescues him from the powers of darkness until he meets God with an unashamed face. For he said, 'I desire charity more than sacrifice.'⁴⁷

I myself say to you – I, Gabriel – that he who gives charity on the day of my investiture, whether he feeds a widow or an orphan or a stranger in my name, or gives a full offering in my name, or copies the book of my investiture so I will be remembered, I shall not stop petitioning on that man's behalf before God, the ruler of all, until God forgives all his sins and he inherits with all the holy ones. For he has remembered God; he has glorified my name in this world. Since God does not want anyone to go to judgment, he has suffered all these things on Man's behalf to rescue him from the hands of the enemy and give him the gift of his good Father."

⁴⁵ 'They' probably refers to the denizens of heaven ('the first-born'), who gather with the angelic host for heavenly liturgy. The idea, as seen at the end of the paragraph, is that earthly and heavenly liturgy are celebrated together as a reflection of unity in the community of the faithful.

⁴⁶ Ms. "them"

⁴⁷ Hosea 6:6

The Fall of Satan and the Appointment of Archangels

Now the apostles listened as Gabriel, (92) the messenger of life, said all this. They marveled greatly and rejoiced and were so happy about the body and blood of God's son, because a tremendous gift for the forgiveness of sins was given to sinners who turn back and repent. So they rejoiced that the Lord had revealed to them the glory and honor of the holy archangel Gabriel.

Thomas responded, saying, "My Lord, you revealed to us everything we asked about, and you persuaded us in our hearts about all of them. But we want you to persuade us about this one other thing: On what day and in what month did you appoint the archangel Gabriel? (Tell us) so we may proclaim his investiture throughout the whole world, so the rich will remember the poor because of the glory and honor of his holy name, and give bread or a cup of water to the needy in his holy name, and so he may petition on their behalf on the day of their agony."

The Savior responded and said to Thomas, "Listen to me, my elect Thomas, and all of you, my holy limbs, and I will tell you everything. Now it happened that when we created Adam after our likeness and image, the Father commanded all the heavenly ranks (93) to come and worship Adam. So they all came and worshipped him joyfully. But when they got to (the angel) who was formed first, Saklataboth, which means 'son of destruction,' my Father said to him, 'Come, worship my likeness and my image.' But he responded with anger, saying, 'I will not worship him; for I am greater than he!' When my Father saw the massive arrogance within him, he became angry and commanded a mighty cherub to overturn his aeon so that he was deprived of his great glory and descended all the way down to such an extreme form of humiliation. Thus the ranks turned against each other. And when my Father had him cast down to the earth, the earth became terrified.

It was at that moment he appointed Michael, and then Gabriel, down to the seventh archangel in rank. It was on the twelfth day of the month of Hathor that my Father appointed Michael; and as for Gabriel, it was on the twenty-second of the month of Choiak. Then (he appointed) Raphael, Souriel, Zedekiel, Zalathiel, and Anael, and then the cherubim and seraphim. And as for me, I was begotten on the twenty-ninth day of the month of Choiak by my mother Mary, the pure virgin. Therefore those in heaven and those on earth celebrate (94) in merriment from the twelfth day of Hathor to the twenty-ninth of Choiak because of these two magnificent angels – Michael on the twelfth of Hathor, and Gabriel on the twenty-second of Choiak. And I was born on the twenty-ninth of the same month.⁴⁸ So then, my elect apostles, when you go

⁴⁸ These feast days in honor of Michael and Gabriel are still observed today in the calendar (synaxarium) of the Orthodox Coptic Church. The month of Hathor runs from early November to early December in the Gregorian calendar, and is followed by the month of Choiak. Thus the celebrations dedicated to Michael, Gabriel, and Jesus (Christmas) occur within a period of two months.

into the world, proclaim to them, saying, ‘Do not refrain from giving charity,’ in my name and in the name of my elect archangels, Michael and Gabriel. For it is they who petition on behalf of the entire human race.’”

The Apostolic Commission

Now when the apostles heard this, they were satisfied over the investiture of the archangel Gabriel, the messenger of life, because they had heard great mysteries from him. So they sang and blessed and glorified the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, saying, “Blessed is the hour in which the Lord chose us, the disciples, so that we might hear these great mysteries that he revealed to us through his great archangel Gabriel.”

Then the Savior asked them, (95) “My holy apostles, are your hearts satisfied over what you heard and everything you asked me concerning the investiture of the great archangel Gabriel?”

They responded, saying, “You have honored us so much, our Lord; you have revealed to us these great and hidden mysteries. Now then, bless us, look after us, become our protector and our salvation everywhere we go, and rescue us from the snares of the enemy until we finish our preaching and hurry back to you.”

The Savior blessed them, saying, “May the blessings of my Father be with you. May you continue to abide in abiding joy, and conquer every power of the enemy through the sign of the cross and the seal of my divine body and esteemed blood. May the shadow of your bodies raise the dead.⁴⁹ May the demons and powers of darkness flee before you. And may those who bless you be under the eternal blessing. Now get up and go into every region of the world, and proclaim the holy gospel and all the great mysteries (97) from the holy messenger Gabriel. Proclaim the day of his investiture, the twenty-second of Choiak, because it is a blessed day, a joyful day, and (a day) for the forgiveness of sin. Indeed I say to you, everyone who provides for a full offering, or who opens a bottle of wine in the name of my elect archangel Gabriel, the messenger of life, I will give him ten-thousand fold in my kingdom – especially he who hastens to provide for the book of his investiture,⁵⁰ to copy it so he will be remembered and called upon in the house of God. I will tear up the record of all his sins.

Simply go and preach to all humanity in my name, saying, ‘So says he who was crucified on your behalf, sons of Adam: Fight for yourselves; listen to the teachings you have heard, and do them, so you may inherit the goodness the Father has prepared for those who love him, those who believe in our holy preaching. For he has

⁴⁹ Cf. Acts 5:5

⁵⁰ I.e., to pay for it to be copied.

prepared a grave punishment for those who do not believe in our words' – and in my (98) death and my holy resurrection and all the sufferings I received on their behalf. If they persist in their sins and sexual perversions, in their lack of charity for one another, in their arrogance and violence, and in their crooked judgements on the poor and the orphan and the widow – indeed everyone who leaves the body defiled in these matters will be cast into punishments prepared for sinners, and they will receive according to their wicked deeds. For they were told, but they did not want to repent that they might see. Who indeed will be able to petition on their behalf in that hour? For they did nothing good. They will receive no mercy whatsoever in their agony. But 'mercy boasts over judgement.'⁵¹

Now then, my blessed disciples, go out to the entire world, gather my scattered sheep, take them and baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and give them my body and blood for the forgiveness of their sins. Behold, your paths will be straight before you, and everywhere will receive you until you fulfill all my commands. (99) May the peace of my Father be with you all forever and ever. Amen."

Now when the Savior had said this to the apostles, he blessed them and went up to heaven in glory, while the two great archangels, Michael and Gabriel, sang for him along with multitudes of angels in peace. Amen. But as for us, the apostles, when we heard these words of life from the Savior, our hearts were strengthened. We travelled throughout the entire world and proclaimed this magnificent gift for the forgiveness of sin, which came for all Christians who shall do the will of God. Also, (we proclaimed) the investiture of the holy archangel Gabriel, about the words he spoke to us concerning our common salvation, and about the great glory of the angels and all the ranks of heaven that our Lord Jesus Christ told us about, so that everyone will glorify him in joy and happiness. For his is the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

As for me, Stephen, the lowliest in the world, as I was following my fathers, the apostles, I witnessed and heard from them these magnificent marvels the Savior had revealed (100) to them. And I wrote them all down so that the holy archangel Gabriel, the messenger of the aeons of light, will obtain grace for all of us from our Lord Jesus Christ, to forgive us our sins. Glory to him and his good Father and the life-giving, consubstantial Holy Spirit, now and for all time, forever and ever. Amen.

The Book of the Investiture of the Holy Archangel Gabriel is complete. May his holy blessings be with you. Amen.

⁵¹ James 2:13

*Colophon*⁵²

Everyone who reads in this book, be so kind as to pray for Theodore our god-loving brother. For he provided for it⁵³ and gave it to the place of the archangel Michael (at) Phantau for the salvation of his soul, so that the holy archangels Michael and Gabriel may obtain grace from God on his behalf, that God may forgive his sins as on the day the world was brought forth, that he might bless him with the blessings of every heaven, along with his wife and children and everything which belongs to him, and that he may place his blessing and peace in his house every day, and write his name in the book of life, and in exchange for his devotion give him a hundred-fold in Jerusalem, the heavenly city of all the holy ones. Amen. May it be so.

Bless me and forgive me, my clerical fathers, who will read in this book. Pray for me in love so God will give me knowledge. I am John the psalmist, brother of Mina the deacon of Touton. Be patient with me, (for) surely my mind unknowingly erred in some phrase. I have copied according to the exemplar we possess. From (the year of) Dioc(letian), 609.⁵⁴

⁵² Coptic text in Arnold van Lantschoot, *Recueil des colophons des manuscrits chrétiens d'Égypte*, vol. 1: *Les colophons coptes des manuscrits sahidiques* (Louvain: J.-B. Istaš, 1929), 35–37, no. XIX.

⁵³ I.e., provided funding for the book to be copied. The copyist himself is named below.

⁵⁴ 892/893 CE.